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MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE
SUPERMAN
STARRING IN
ACTION COMICS
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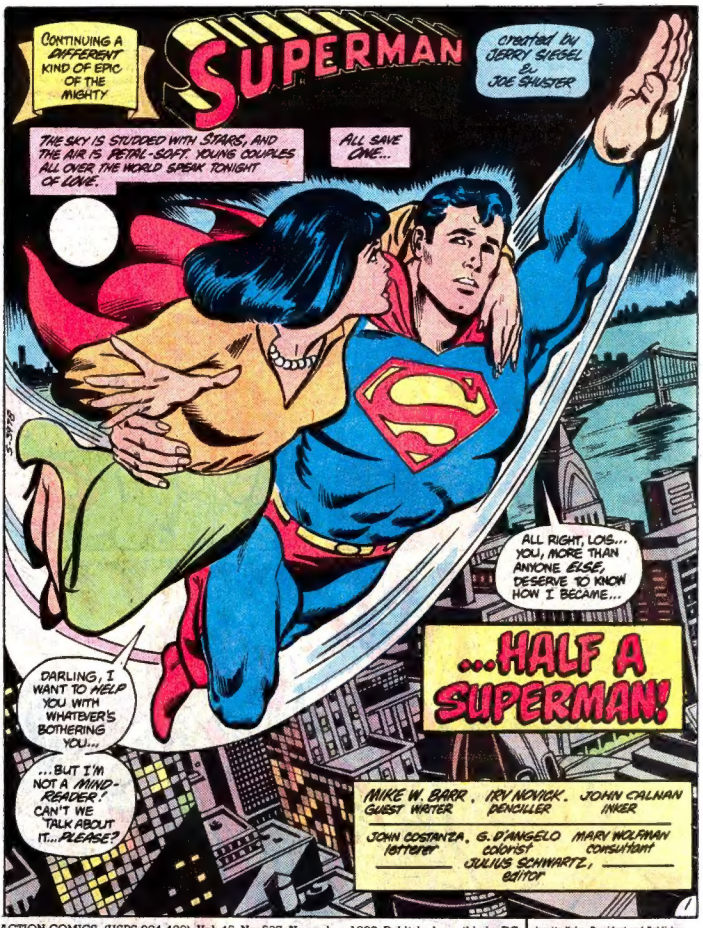
NO. 537
NOV.
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
TRAPPED IN THE PAST...
DEFEATED IN THE PRESENT...
BUCKLER & ROADHS
DOES SUPERMAN HAVE A FUTURE?


CONTINUING A DIFFERENT KIND OF EPIC OF THE MIGHTY
SUPERMAN
created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
THE SKY IS STUDDED WITH STARS, AND THE AIR IS PETAL-SOFT. YOUNG COUPLES ALL OVER THE WORLD SPEAK TONIGHT OF LOVE.
ALL SAVE ONE...
ALL RIGHT, LOIS... YOU, MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, DESERVE TO KNOW HOW I BECAME...
...HALF A SUPERMAN!
DARLING, I WANT TO HELP YOU WITH WHATEVER'S BOTHERING YOU...
...BUT I'M NOT A MIND-READER! CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT IT...PLEASE?
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CAN I TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT YOU REMEMBER LORD SATANIS?
I'LL ASSUME THAT MEANS YES...
UH-HUH--I KEEP A FILE ON ALL EVIL WIZARDS FROM THE FUTURE WHO KIDNAP ME! *
*Action #527 --JULIE
WELL, SATANIS RECENTLY RETURNED AND GAVE ME THE MOST SEVERE CASE OF SPLIT PERSONALITY ON RECORD!
HE... WHAT--?!
HE TOOK HALF MY POWERS --AND HALF OF ME WITH THEM!
I CAN SEE THIS IS GOING TO GET COMPLICATED! HOW ABOUT SOME TEA, DARLING?
SOUNDS FINE--BUT DON'T EXPECT ME TO BOIL THE WATER WITH MY HEAT VISION!
THAT'S GONE...
...TRAPPED IN THE MIDDLE AGES WITH MY OTHER HALF! BOTH SATANIS AND HIS WIFE, SARENE, WANTED TO USE MY INVULNERABLE BODY FOR SOME MYSTIC EXPERIMENT! SO THEY BEGAN PLAYING TUG-OF-WAR...
...AND I LOST! THEY SPLIT ME INTO TWO SUPERMEN, EACH ONE POSSESSING ONLY HALF MY FULL POWERS! THEY KEPT THE INVULNERABLE HALF IN THE PAST SO THEY COULD LOSE HIM...*
*Action #534 -- J.S.

...AND SENT ME BACK TO THE PRESENT TIME, WHERE I'D BE OUT OF THEIR WAY! BUT I WON'T BE PUT OFF THAT EASILY!
I HAVE TO GET MY POWERS BACK!
SIT DOWN, DEAR, AND LET'S TALK IT OVER! I BREWED YOUR TEA JUST THE WAY YOU--
;OHH!: TRIPPED..!
NO PROBLEM, HONEY...
...NOT WHEN I CAN CATCH YOU AND THE CUPS BEFORE THEY--
AGGGGH!
YOUR HAND...!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? LET ME LOOK AT IT...
I-I'M FINE, LOIS... JUST USED TO THINKING OF MYSELF AS INVULNERABLE, THAT'S ALL!
I'D BETTER LEAVE...TRY TO FIND SOME WAY TO GET MY MISSING POWERS BACK BEFORE SOMETHING WORSE HAPPENS!
IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO...
THERE IS, LOIS--PRAY THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT DOESN'T FIND OUT ABOUT MY POWER-LOSS...
...BUT IF THEY DO... YOU CAN CHOOSE MY PALLBEARERS!
AND THE MAN WHO ONCE FLEW THROUGH BLAZING SUNS DEPARTS, TAKING CARE NOT TO HURT HIS SCALDED HAND...
3

THE LOADING DOCK AT METROPOLIS ELECTRONICS: ORDINARILY CLOSED AT THIS HOUR, BUT TONIGHT, SITE OF SOME GUYS TRYING TO SNAG SOME OVERTIME...
...AMONG OTHER THINGS!
AWAY FROM PRYING EYES, TEMPERED STEEL VIOLATES SEASONED WOOD...
KREEEK
MACHINE PARTS
FLIRTIVE EYES DART BACK AND FORTH...
...THEN SEIZE THE MOMENT, AND CONCEAL THE PRIZE!
HAMMERSMITH! WHERE'S HAMMERSMITH?
RIGHT HERE, MR. BLISS!
MACHINE PARTS
WHERE YOU BEEN, HAMMERSMITH? TAKIN' YER BEAUTY SLEEP? UNLOAD THAT CRATE, AND GET YER TAIL BACK THERE FOR ANOTHER ONE!
YES, SIR, MR. BLISS! RIGHT AWAY!
MACHINE PARTS
DUMMY! WITH THE COMPONENT I STOLE, I'LL BE GIVIN' THE ORDERS-- AND YOU'LL BE TAKIN' 'EM!
PERHAPS SOME WAKEFUL CHILD SEES THIS SHOOTING STAR AND WISHES...
4

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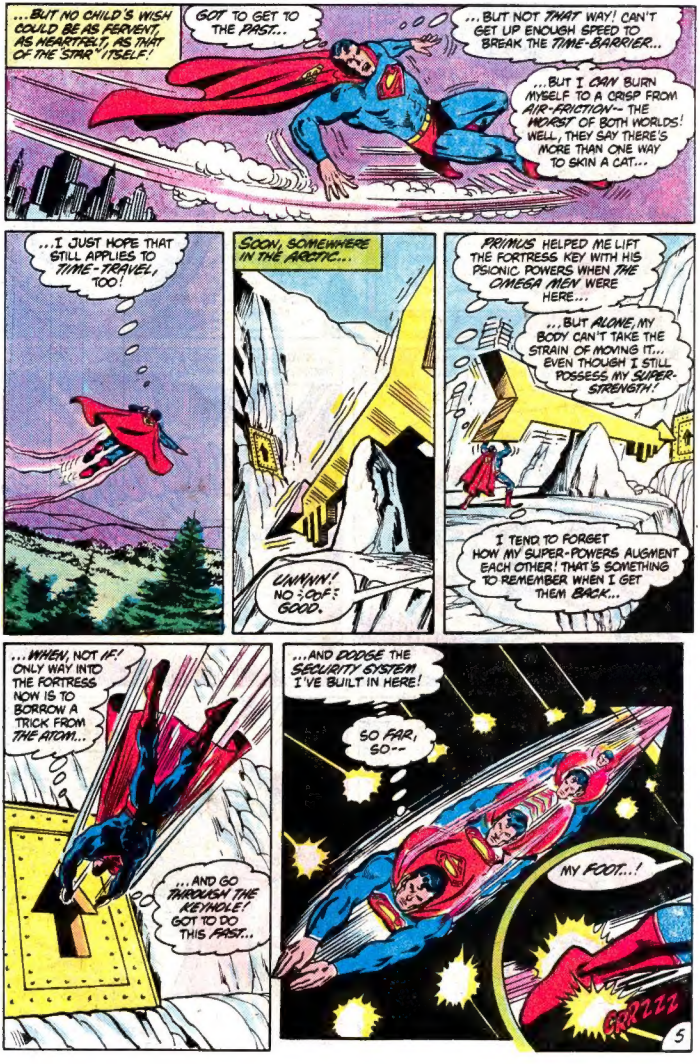
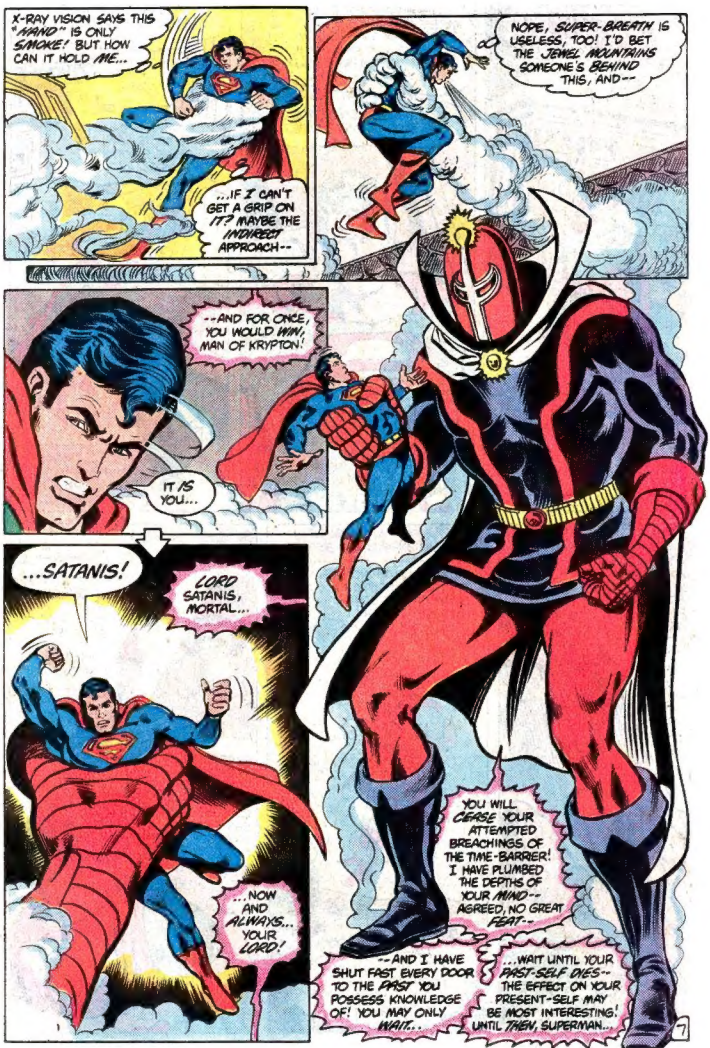
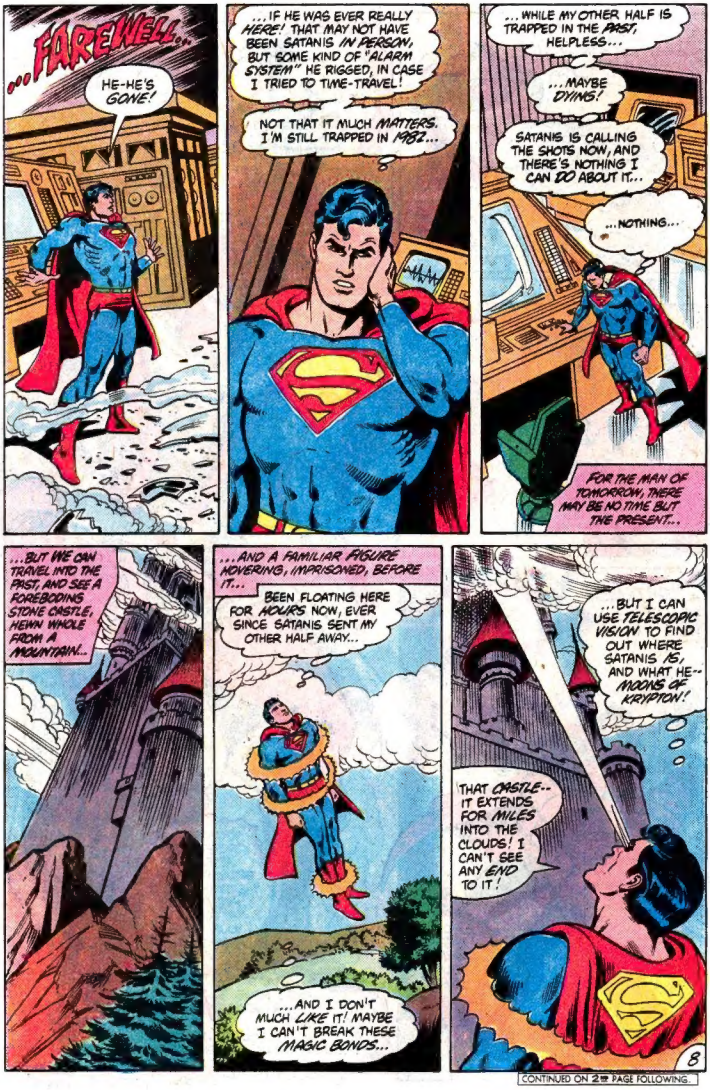

...BUT NO CHILD'S WISH COULD BE AS FERVENT, AS HEARTFELT, AS THAT OF THE STAR "ITSELF!
GOT TO GET TO THE PAST...
...BUT NOT THAT WAY! CAN'T GET UP ENOUGH SPEED TO BREAK THE TIME-BARRIER...
...BUT I CAN BURN MYSELF TO A CRISP FROM AIR-FRICTION!— THE WORST OF BOTH WORLDS! WELL, THEY SAY THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A CAT...
...I JUST HOPE THAT STILL APPLIES TO TIME-TRAVEL, TOO!
SOON, SOMEWHERE IN THE ARCTIC...
UNNNN! NO ; OOF : GOOD.
PRIMUS HELPED ME LIFT THE FORTRESS KEY WITH HIS PSIONIC POWERS WHEN THE OMEGA MEN WERE HERE...
...BUT ALONE, MY BODY CAN'T TAKE THE STRAIN OF MOVING IT... EVEN THOUGH I STILL POSSESS MY SUPER-STRENGTH!
I TEND TO FORGET HOW MY SUPER-POWERS AUGMENT EACH OTHER! THAT'S SOMETHING TO REMEMBER WHEN I GET THEM BACK...
...WHEW, NOT IF! ONLY WAY INTO THE FORTRESS NOW IS TO BORROW A TRICK FROM THE ATOM...
...AND GO THROUGH THE KEYHOLE! GOT TO DO THIS FAST...
...AND DODGE THE SECURITY SYSTEM I'VE BUILT IN HERE!
SO FAR, SO--
MY FOOT...!
GRRZZZ
5

;WHEW! THAT GLANCING STUN-BLAST WILL MAKE IT NUMB FOR A WHILE, BUT THAT'S ALL!
IT'S TIMES LIKE THIS I THANK RAO FOR MY VOW NEVER TO TAKE HUMAN LIFE... OR I MIGHT HAVE RIGGED THE KEYHOLE WITH SOMETHING DEADLIER!
HERE WE GO, THE TIME-BUBBLE FROM THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES! THEY GAVE IT TO ME AS A MEMENTO...
...BUT IT'S FUNCTIONAL, AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS! NOW TO WARM 'ER UP; AND--
UH-OH! THE THINGS SHAKING LIKE A LEAF AND SPITTING SPARKS! I'D BETTER--
RMMMMMM
A THOUSAND NEEDLE-THIN SHARDS OF CHROMIUM PIERCE THE VERY AIR...
KROOOM
...BUT NOT THE ONCE-MAN OF STEEL!
GOOD THING MY COSTUME'S STILL INDESTRUCTIBLE, EVEN IF I'M NOT! BETTER CLEAR OUT SOME OF THIS SMOKE, AND--
GREAT KRYPTON! WHA--?!


X-RAY VISION SAYS THIS "HAND" IS ONLY SMOKE! BUT HOW CAN IT HOLD ME...
...IF I CAN'T GET A GRIP ON IT? MAYBE THE INDIRECT APPROACH--
NOPE, SUPER-BREATH IS USELESS, TOO! I'D BET THE JEWEL MOUNTAINS SOMEONE'S BEHIND THIS, AND--
--AND FOR ONCE, YOU WOULD WIN, MAN OF KRYPTON!
IT IS YOU...
...SATANIS!
LORD SATANIS, MORTAL...
...NOW AND ALWAYS... YOUR LORD!
--AND I HAVE SHUT FAST EVERY DOOR TO THE PAST YOU POSSESS KNOWLEDGE OF! YOU MAY ONLY WAIT...
YOU WILL CURSE YOUR ATTEMPTED BREACHINGS OF THE TIME-BARRIER! I HAVE PLUMBED THE DEPTHS OF YOUR MIND-- AGREED, NO GREAT FEAT--
...WAIT UNTIL YOUR PAST-SELF DIES-- THE EFFECT ON YOUR PRESENT-SELF MAY BE MOST INTERESTING! UNTIL THEN, SUPERMAN...


...FAREWELL...
HE-HE'S GONE!
...IF HE WAS EVER REALLY HERE! THAT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN SATANIS IN PERSON, BUT SOME KIND OF "ALARM SYSTEM" HE RIGGED, IN CASE I TRIED TO TIME-TRAVEL!
NOT THAT IT MUCH MATTERS. I'M STILL TRAPPED IN 1982...
...WHILE MY OTHER HALF IS TRAPPED IN THE PAST, HELPLESS...
...MAYBE DYING!
SATANIS IS CALLING THE SHOTS NOW, AND THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT...
...NOTHING...
FOR THE MAN OF TOMORROW, THERE MAY BE NO TIME BUT THE PRESENT...
...BUT WE CAN TRAVEL INTO THE PAST, AND SEE A FOREBODING STONE CASTLE, HEWN WHOLE FROM A MOUNTAIN...
...AND A FAMILIAR FIGURE HOVERING, IMPRISONED, BEFORE IT...
BEEN FLOATING HERE FOR HOURS NOW, EVER SINCE SATANIS SENT MY OTHER HALF AWAY...
...AND I DON'T MUCH LIKE IT! MAYBE I CAN'T BREAK THESE MAGIC BONDS...
...BUT I CAN USE TELESCOPIC VISION TO FIND OUT WHERE SATANIS IS, AND WHAT HE--MOONS OF KRYPTON!
THAT CASTLE-- IT EXTENDS FOR MILES INTO THE CLOUDS! I CAN'T SEE ANY END TO IT!

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE... EVERYTHING HAS AN END! I--EH?
SYRENE!!
HAVE YOU NOT YET LEARNED, SUPERMAN? NATURAL LAWS MUST EVER BOW BEFORE THE RULE OF MAGIC! NOT ONLY IS MY CASTLE ENDLESS...
...BUT SO WILL BE MY POWER, ONCE I HAVE ASSIMILATED THE MAGICKS OF THE RUNESTONE INTO MY PERSON!
BUT THOSE MAGICKS MUST BE FILTERED THROUGH AN INVULNERABLE BODY--SUCH AS YOURS--TO RENDER THEM ABSORBABLE BY MYSELF!
...AND NOW AND FOR ETERNITY, SYRENE HAS WON!
OF COURSE, THIS WILL DESTROY YOU, UTTERLY AND FOREVER...
...BUT THAT IS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY!
AND WHAT I THINK OBVIOUSLY DOESN'T COUNT! BETTER STALL IF I CAN--SOMETHING MIGHT OCCUR TO ME!
IS SATANIS GOING TO LET YOU GET AWAY WITH THIS, SYRENE? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM?
SILENCE! DO YOU NOT THINK I KNOW YOUR INTENT? ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT MY HUSBAND HAS LOST...
STARTING TO FEEL MYSELF WEAKENING... DOING! AND THE ONLY OTHER PERSON WHO KNOWS I'M BACK HERE IS MY OTHER HALF!
DOESN'T HE KNOW THE DANGER I'M IN? WHERE IS HE? WHERE?

HERE WE ARE, MY USUAL STOP! ALMOST MISSED IT, THOUGH...
;YAWWWNN:
...SINCE WITHOUT MY INVULNERABILITY, I NEED A FULL NIGHT'S SLEEP-- AND BETWEEN WORRYING ABOUT SATANIS' BARRIER AND MY MISSING HALF...
...I SURE DIDN'T GET IT! BUT CLARK KENT HAD BETTER SHOW UP, IF ONLY TO--
GETCHER PAPER! LATEST NEWS ON SUPERMAN!
GETCHER PAPER, MISTER?
NO, THANKS, I--
NEWS ON SUPERMAN--?!
GREAT SCOTT, I WAS AFRAID OF THIS! THE MOLE FAILED TO KILL ME WHEN HE KIDNAPPED ME FROM THE HOSPITAL--THOUGH NOT FROM LACK OF TRYING...
...AND NOW HE WANTS TO SEE THAT SOMEONE ELSE FINISHES THE JOB! TRUST THE EAGLE TO PUBLISH IT, TOO!
SUPERMAN WEAKENED!
INTERVIEW WITH CAPTURED MOLE
4 #535 -- J.S.
I HAVE A FEELING IT'S GOING TO BE OPEN SEASON ON SUPERMAN FROM NOW ON...
...WHICH, ON TOP OF MY OTHER PROBLEMS, IS JUST WHAT I NEEDED...
...LIKE ANOTHER NOSE!
AND SPEAKING OF OTHER PROBLEMS...
METROPOLIS EAGLE
SUPERMAN WEAKENED!
IT'S GOIN' SMOOTH AS SATIN! ANOTHER FEW MINUTES, AND SUPERMAN CAN START LOOKIN' FOR A NEW PLACE OF BUSINESS-- HE'LL BE FINISHED IN METROPOLIS!
MAN, TALK ABOUT YOUR CAN'T-LOSE PROPOSITIONS...!

I WAS PLANNIN' ON HIGH-TAILIN' IT OUTTA METROPOLIS AFTER I STOLE EVERYTHING I NEEDED!
I MEAN, A GUY'D HAVE TO BE NUTS TO BECOME A BIG-TIME CROOK WITH SUPERMAN AROUND!
BUT HE AIN'T INVULNERABLE ANY MORE! ACCORDIN' TO THE EAGLE, HE BLEEDS JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE!
ALL HE'S GOT GOING FOR HIM NOW IS STREAMSTAY! AN' THANKS TO THE MINI-MOTOR I SWIPED...
... THE MOTOR THAT PUTS THE MUSCLE IN MY HYDRAULIC POWER-PUNCH..
...I'M JUST AS STRONG AS SUPERMAN! BETTER YET, MY ARMOR MAKES ME INDESTRUCTIBLE--WHICH HE AIN'T!
GOODBYE, JACKSON HAMMERSMITH--HELLO, JACKHAMMER...
...AND SO LONG, SUPERMAN!
WHACK-AK-AK-A
11

DAILY PLANET
EXCUSE ME, CLARK...
...GOT A MINUTE? I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING.
UH, SURE, LOIS-- JUST LET ME PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THIS PIECE, AND...
GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
THAT WAS PERRY, WASN'T IT?
OR A WOUNDED BULL ELEPHANT! BUT LISTEN, CLARK...
SORRY, LOIS, BETTER SEE WHAT'S UP FIRST!
BUT, CLARK--!
YOU'VE BEEN AVOIDING ME ALL WEEK, MR. KENT... BUT WE HAVE TO TALK SOMETIME, AND I WON'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER!
WHAT'S WRONG, PERRY? WORLD WAR III BREAK OUT?
NOT THAT BAD, CLARK... BUT BAD ENOUGH! LOOK AT THIS!
I WAS PASSING THROUGH PASTE-UP WHEN I SAW IT! THIS WOULD HAVE APPEARED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE PLANET!
BAD ENOUGH THAT CROOKS LIKE THE MOLE USE THE EAGLE AS A SOAPBOX-- NOW THEY'RE TRYING TO BUY AD SPACE!
ARE--ARE WE GOING TO PRINT THIS?
DAILY PLANET
I CHALLENGE THE FORMER SUPERMAN! YOU'LL FIND OUT WHERE TONIGHT! JACKHAMMER
12

NO! BUT DON'T LOSE ANY SLEEP WORRYING ABOUT THIS "JACKHAMMER'S" FREEDOM OF THE PRESS--HE BOUGHT THE AD WITH STOLEN MONEY!
YOU'RE SURE?
UH-HUH. CLASSIFIED REMEMBERS A TALL GUY IN A RAINCOAT PAYING CASH FOR THE AD THIS MORNING. ON A HUNCH, I CALLED INSPECTOR HENDERSON...
...AND HE TRACED THE MONEY TO AN ARMORED CAR ROBBERY LAST NIGHT! LOOKS LIKE THIS "JACKHAMMER" MAY BE MORE THAN JUST A PUBLICITY SEEKER!
BUT I WANT YOU TO WRITE A STORY ABOUT IT, CLARK, SO SUPERMAN KNOWS! GOT IT?
IT'S DONE, PERRY!
CLARK, WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT? CLARK--?
CLARK K
CLARK KENT, DO YOU HEAR ME?
OF LATE, THE METROPOLIS TRANSIT AUTHORITY HAS RECEIVED MORE COMPLAINTS ABOUT ITS TRAINS THAN IT LIKES TO ADMIT..
BUT PLEASE DON'T BLAME THE MTA FOR THE SUDDEN CONVULSIVE CHURNINGS OF THE ELEVATED LINE, THIS MIDNIGHT...
R-R-R-U-U-U-M-M!
...OR FOR THE SUDDEN REMOVAL FROM SERVICE OF THAT SAME LINE, A FEW SECONDS LATER!
K-RASSSH
TERRY
13

;YAWN;
IF MR. JACKHAMMER IS GOING TO MAKE HIS MOVE, I WISH HE'D HURRY UP! CLARK KENT HAS TO BE BACK AT WORK IN--
HOLD IT-- THAT SOUND--
K-PASSSSH
--MUST BE MY MAN! A SHOT OF HEAT VISION WILL--
BLAST! I KEEP FORGETTING I DON'T HAVE ANY HEAT VISION! IN THAT CAGE...
...I'LL MAKE THIS FACE-TO-FACE, AND HOPEFULLY SHORT! POURING ON THE CONFIDENCE CAN'T HURT!
JACKHAMMER, I PRESUME? NOW THAT YOU'VE GOTTEN THIS OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM, COME ALONG QUIETLY OR--
BUT, SUPERMAN, WE'VE JUST MET! I HAVEN'T EVEN GIVEN YOU--
--MY HAND!
WHACK-AK
UNNNGH!
RAO, IT FEELS LIKE HE TORE THE SIDE OF MY HEAD OFF! I'M NOT USED TO DODGING BLOWS! I'D BETTER--
? OH, NO...
A TRAIN'S COMING-- TOO FAST TO STOP BEFORE THEY CRASH!
SCREEEEEEE!

;WHEW! THAT PUNCH TOOK MORE OUT OF ME THAN I THOUGHT! FEELS LIKE I'M SWIMMING THROUGH MOLASSES, BUT I'VE GOT TO REACH THAT TRAIN...
...AND EVEN IF I REACH IT... CAN I TAKE THE STRAIN OF LIFTING IT?
EEEEK!
LOOK OUT!
SCREEECH
BETTER SECURE YOURSELVES, FOLKS! WE'RE GOIN' OVER!
WHAT THE--? I HEARD OF AIR BRAKES, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WORKED LIKE THIS!
THEY DON'T, FRIEND... ;GASP;... BUT MY SUPER-BREATH DOES!
IN FACT... IT'S GOING TO BE ;GASP; TOUCH-AND-GO AS IS...!
WITH SIGHS OF RELIEF, THE NIGHT-PASSENGERS RETURN TO THEIR SEATS...
WHOOOSH
THANK HEAVEN THE NIGHT TRAINS ARE SHORTER THAN THE RUSH-HOUR TRAINS... OTHERWISE, I MIGHT NOT MAKE THIS...!

GASP! THEY'RE SAFE.
BUT... SO WEAK... SO WEARY...
JUST ONE PUNCH DID THIS TO ME...
...ONE PUNCH...
THUMP
AND AS RIDERS DOZE FITFULLY INSIDE...
...A VERY SPECIAL PASSENGER DOES OUTSIDE...
...AND IS LOST IN THE EBON NIGHT!
I DID IT! HAHA, I DID IT!
WITH ONE PUNCH, I DID WHAT NO ONE ELSE COULD EVER DO~ NOT LUTHOR, NOT BRAINIAC... NOBODY!
I BEAT SUPERMAN!
NEXT ISSUE
"THE MEASURE OF A SUPERMAN!"
ON SALE SEPT. 23! IT'S A DATE!

THE SON OF A LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPER AND A WOMAN EXILED FROM SUNKEN ATLANTIS, ARTHUR CURRY GREW TO MANHOOD WITH THE POWER TO COMMAND ALL FORMS OF SEA-LIFE! TODAY HE IS THE KING OF THE SEVEN SEAS, THE MARINE MARVEL KNOWN AS...

AQUAMAN

LIKE A VIDEOTAPE ON "FAST FORWARD", THE EVENTS OF THE MOMENTOUS MORNING FLASH THROUGH AQUAMAN'S MIND --
--HOW HE AWOKE WITH A START AFTER DREAMING THAT HIS WIFE, MERA, FORCED TO RETURN TO HER HOME-DIMENSION OR DIE, WAS CALLING OUT TO HIM FOR HELP!
--HOW A TEST WITH A S.T.A.R. LABS "BRAIN-PRINTER" SHOWED THAT THE DREAM COULD WELL HAVE BEEN REAL!
--HOW SOMETHING TURNED THE WATER AROUND A SEA-STATION SOLID, CREATING THE EQUIVALENT OF AN EARTHQUAKE AND TRAPPING A NAVY DIVER...
...A DIVER WHO TURNED OUT TO BE--
MERA?!?
SOMETHING FISHY!

S-3969

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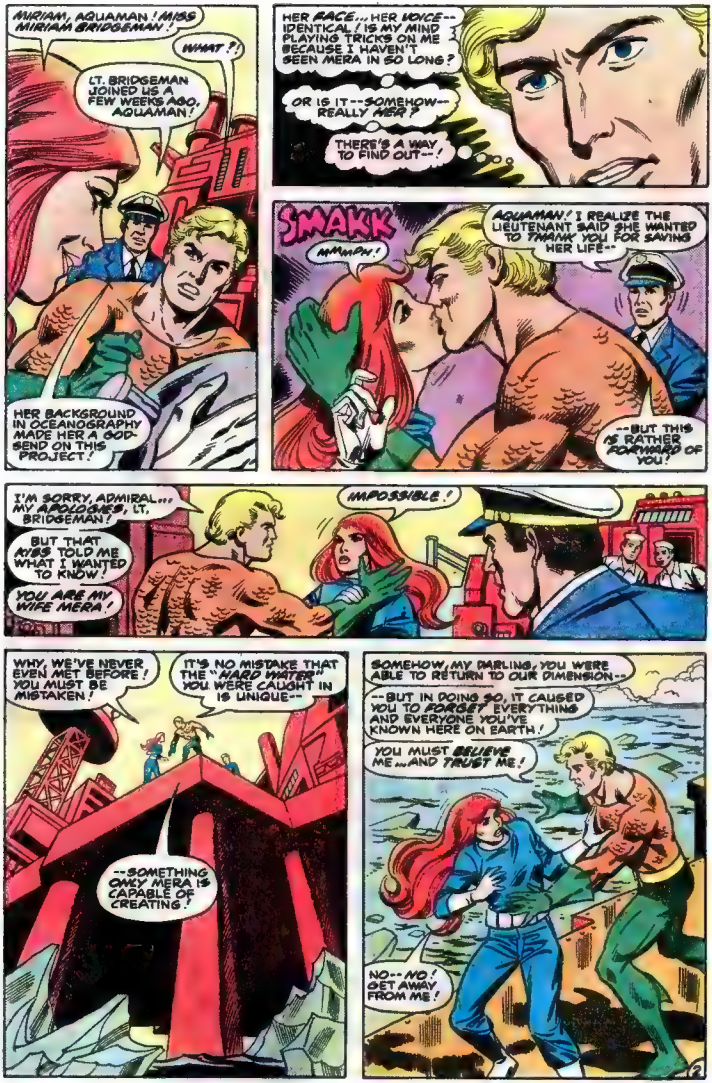
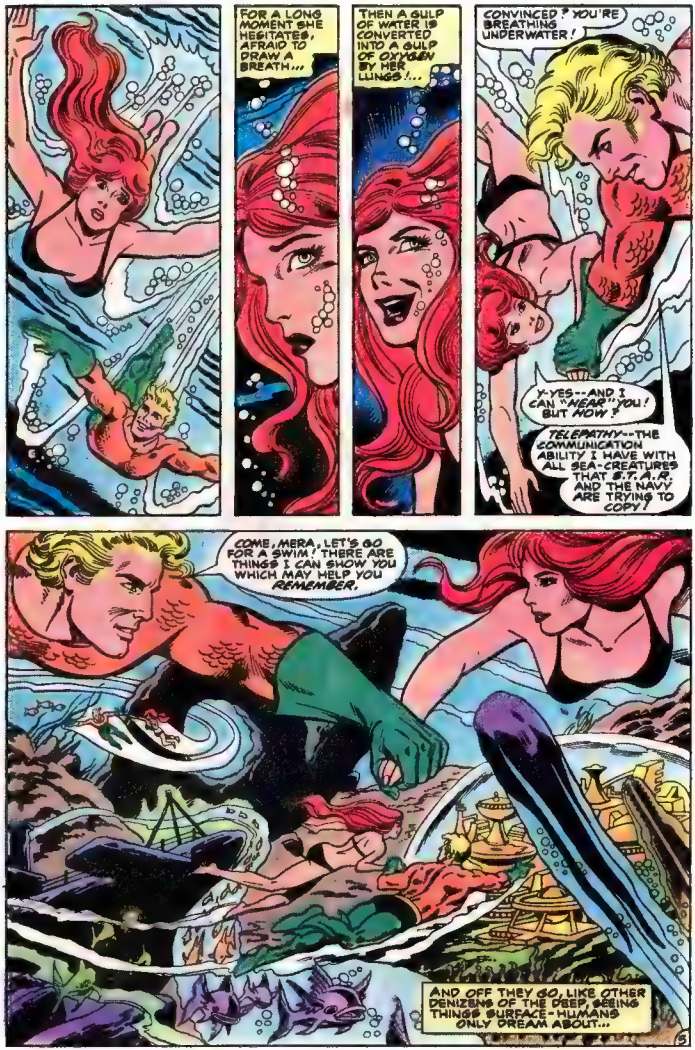
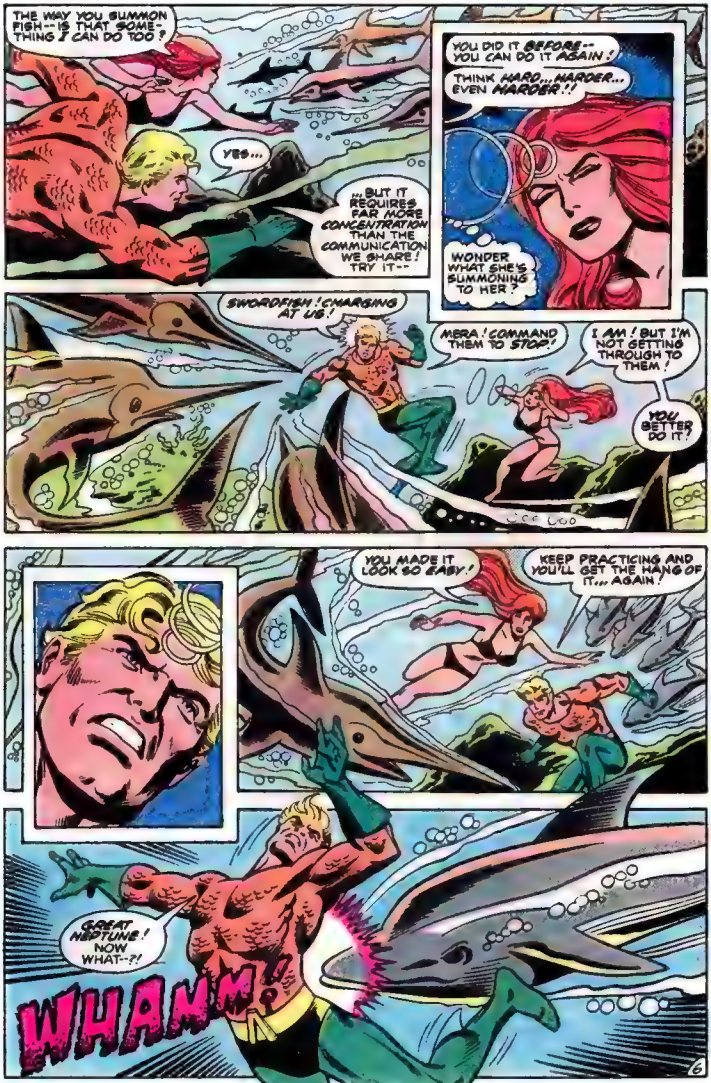

MIRIAM, AQUAMAN! MISS MIRIAM BRIDGEMAN!
WHAT?!
LT. BRIDGEMAN JOINED US A FEW WEEKS AGO, AQUAMAN!
HER BACKGROUND IN OCEANOGRAPHY MADE HER A GOD-SEND ON THIS PROJECT!
HER RACE... HER VOICE-- IDENTICAL! IS MY MIND PLAYING TRICKS ON ME BECAUSE I HAVEN'T SEEN MERA IN SO LONG?
OR IS IT--SOMEHOW-- REALLY HER?
THERE'S A WAY TO FIND OUT--!
SMAKK
MMMPH!
AQUAMAN! I REALIZE THE LIEUTENANT SAID SHE WANTED TO SMAAK YOU FOR SAVING HER LIFE--
--BUT THIS IS RATHER FORWARD OF YOU!
I'M SORRY, ADMIRAL... MY APOLOGIES, LT. BRIDGEMAN!
BUT THAT KISS TOLD ME WHAT I WANTED TO KNOW!
YOU ARE MY WIFE MERA!
IMPOSSIBLE!
WHY, WE'VE NEVER EVEN MET BEFORE! YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN!
IT'S NO MISTAKE THAT THE "HARD WATER" YOU WERE CAUGHT IN IS UNIQUE--
--SOMETHING ONLY MERA IS CAPABLE OF CREATING!
SOMEHOW, MY DARLING, YOU WERE ABLE TO RETURN TO OUR DIMENSION--
--BUT IN DOING SO, IT CAUSED YOU TO FORGET EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE YOU'VE KNOWN HERE ON EARTH!
YOU MUST BELIEVE ME... AND TRUST ME!
NO-- NO! GET AWAY FROM ME!

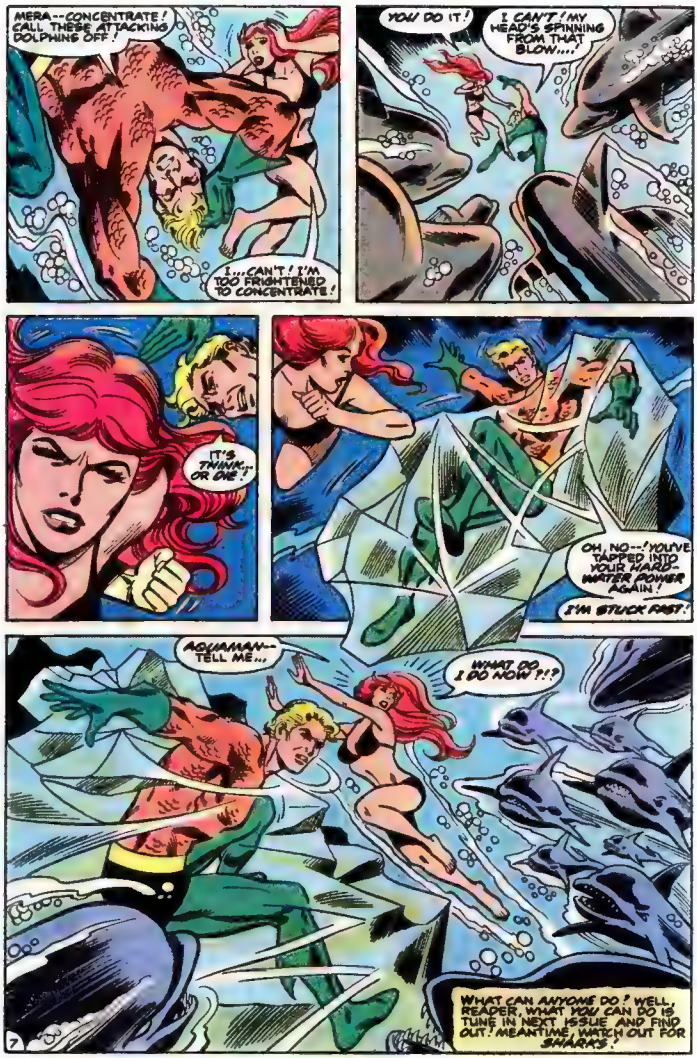
THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH, AQUAMAN! HOW CAN YOU CLAIM THIS WOMAN IS AN IMPOSTOR?
SHE PASSED ALL OUR CLEARANCE CHECKS! HER BACKGROUND CAME THROUGH 100% CLEAN!
I'VE NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT, ADMIRAL! I'M SURE THERE REALLY IS A MIRIAM BRIDGEMAN!
WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT THIS WOMAN--BE SHE THE REAL LT. BRIDGEMAN OR NOT--IS ALSO MY WIFE MERA--
--A WOMAN BORN IN ANOTHER DIMENSION WITH POWERS OVER WATER NOT EVEN I POSSESS!
SO WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO?
"ADMIRAL, I SUGGEST WE HOOK HER INTO DR. CARMEL'S BRAIN-PRINTER AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS..."
I'M NOT QUITE SURE WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND, AQUAMAN! MY DEVICE CAN RECORD BRAIN-WAVES--
--WHICH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHETHER WHAT THE LIEUTENANT'S THINKING IS TRUE OR NOT!
YOU'D DO BETTER WITH A LIE-DETECTOR!
A LIE-DETECTOR DOESN'T KNOW THE TRUTH FROM WHAT SOMEONE WITH AMNESIA BELIEVES, DOCTOR!
I'M HOPING YOU CAN MATCH A CURRENT BRAIN-PRINT WITH SOMETHING BURIED IN MERA...ER, LT. BRIDGEMAN'S MIND!
VERY WELL! LET'S GIVE IT A GO--AND SEE HOW FAR WE GET!
LT. BRIDGEMAN--PLEASE THINK OF THE NAME "ARTHUR CURRY"!
AQUAMAN'S REAL NAME--JULIE
I CAN'T GET ANY READING AT ALL! HER BRAIN-PRINT COME OUT GARBLED!
MAYBE YOU CAN UNSCRAMBLE THE PRINT BY HAVING HER SAY "ARTHUR CURRY" OUT LOUD!

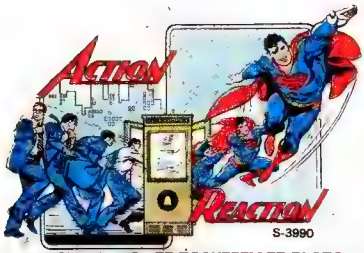
CONTINUED ON PAGE FOLLOWING

AND AFTER THREE MORE ATTEMPTS...
RESULT: ZERO!
ON THE CONTRARY, DOCTOR! THE PRINTS ALL MATCH--WHICH MAY PROVE SOMETHING!
I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT! THEY DON'T FOLLOW ANY NORMS FOR BRAIN-PRINTS!
IT'S LIKE SHE'S NOT HUMAN--
--OR, PERHAPS NOT BORN ON THIS WORLD--?
IF YOU DON'T MIND, DOCTOR--AND ADMIRAL--I'D LIKE TO TRY A TEST OF MY OWN!
SPELL IT OUT, AQUAMAN!
IT'S A TEST TO PROVE SHE REALLY IS MERA!
WHY'D YOU HOLD BACK 'TILL NOW--?
BECAUSE THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF RISK INVOLVED!
I PROPOSE TO TAKE HER--
AQUAMAN, I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D STOP TALKING ABOUT ME AS IF I WERE NOT HERE!
MAYBE I'M NOT WHO YOU EXPECT ME TO BE, BUT IF YOU PLAN ON USING ME AS A GUINEA PIG--
--THE LEAST YOU CAN DO IS SPEAK TO ME DIRECTLY!
I'M TRULY SORRY, LIEUTENANT! I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND--AND THAT YOU'LL INDULGE ME JUST A WHILE LONGER!
I'LL MAKE CHARMING TO IGNORE! NOW WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?
FIRST, CHANGE INTO A SWIM-SUIT...
SHORTLY ON THE SEA-PLATFORM OUTSIDE...
--SO IF I REALLY AM MERA, I'LL BE ABLE TO BREATHE UNDER-WATER! AND IF NOT--?
DON'T WORRY--I WON'T LET YOU DROWN! I'LL BE RIGHT NEXT TO YOU AND WILL BRING YOU UP IN TIME!
MY SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY DEMANDS I FIND OUT THE ANSWER!
I'M ALL SET! READY--?
GO!


FOR A LONG MOMENT SHE HESITATES, AFRAID TO DRAW A BREATH...
THEN A GULP OF WATER IS CONVERTED INTO A GULP OF OXYGEN BY HER LUNGS!...
CONVINCED? YOU'RE BREATHING UNDERWATER!
X-YES--AND I CAN "HEAR" YOU! BUT HOW?
TELEPATHY--THE COMMUNICATION ABILITY I HAVE WITH ALL SEA-CREATURES THAT S.T.A.R. AND THE NAVY ARE TRYING TO COPY!
COME, MERA, LET'S GO FOR A SWIM! THERE ARE THINGS I CAN SHOW YOU WHICH MAY HELP YOU REMEMBER.
AND OFF THEY GO, LIKE OTHER DENIZENS OF THE DEEP, SEEING THINGS SURFACE-HUMANS ONLY DREAM ABOUT...
5


THE WAY YOU SUMMON FISH--IS THAT SOMETHING I CAN DO TOO?
YES...
...BUT IT REQUIRES FAR MORE CONCENTRATION THAN THE COMMUNICATION WE SHARE! TRY IT--
YOU DID IT BEFORE--YOU CAN DO IT AGAIN!
THINK HARD...HARDER...EVEN HARDER!!
WONDER WHAT SHE'S SUMMONING TO HER?
SWORDFISH! CHARGING AT US!
MERA! COMMAND THEM TO STOP!
I AM! BUT I'M NOT GETTING THROUGH TO THEM!
YOU BETTER DO IT!
YOU MADE IT LOOK SO EASY!
KEEP PRACTICING AND YOU'LL GET THE HANG OF IT... AGAIN!
GREAT NEPTUNE! NOW WHAT--?!
WHAM!


MERA--CONCENTRATE! CALL THESE ATTACKING DOLPHINS OFF!
I...CAN'T! I'M TOO FRIGHTENED TO CONCENTRATE!
YOU DO IT!
I CAN'T! MY HEAD'S SPINNING FROM THAT BLOW....
IT'S TWINK-! OR ONE-!
OH, NO--! YOU'VE TAPPED INTO YOUR HARD-WATER POWER AGAIN!
I'M STUCK FAST!
AQUAMAN--TELL ME...
WHAT DO I DO NOW?!?
WHAT CAN AMYONE DO? WELL, READER, WHAT YOU CAN DO IS TUNE IN NEXT ISSUE AND FIND OUT! MEANTIME, WATCH OUT FOR SHARKS!
7



c/o DC COMICS, INC., 75 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

Dear Editor,

"H.I.V.E. and Go Seek" in *ACTION* #532 was a fast-paced, well-orchestrated story. For once I felt that all the major Daily Planet characters fit naturally into the flow of the plot. It was good to see Lois Lane take a central role again; good to see Jimmy Olsen use his signal-watch; good to also see Jimmy using his disguise and make-up abilities (remember when he dressed up as a woman a few years ago to catch some crooks?); good to see the *Teen Titans* make a cameo; and good to see Lana Lang acting like a real TV reporter instead of a stereotyped beautiful-but-nastily-ambitious "news personality".

But there were a couple of things I thought Marv Wolfman could have made better. No sophisticated business keeps important files in open-access storage; a high-tech organization like H.I.V.E. would keep such material in computer storage. Lois should have been suspicious the moment she walked into the file room and saw all the old-fashioned filing cabinets. In fact, that the H.I.V.E. bigwigs pretended to be fooled by her disguise should have tipped her off right away. Surely H.I.V.E. would employ electronic ID checks to guard against just such an infiltration. And *Superman* should have been able to catch the escaping H.I.V.E.rs despite their having ducked down the lead-lined tunnels. He has two super-powers usually ignored by writers: his super-sense of smell and his super-sense of temperature. He could have tracked the crooks by their, uh, scent that they left in the air in passing (hurry=perspiration=aroma) or by their body heat. I know—don't tell me: H.I.V.E. has developed a super-deodorant too!

RAND LEE
3 Higgs Lane
Key West, FL 33040

How'd you know? And it's one that keeps them cool too—in the toughest conditions!

By the way, even though Lois didn't spot the clues when she infiltrated H.I.V.E., we're not surprised you did. After all, Rand, we know that your father, Manfred B. Lee, was half of the writing team better known as Ellery Queen!—BR

* * * * *

"LOOK, MA—THERE'S OUR APARTMENT!" DEPARTMENT: For those of you who have been out of touch recently, the first issue of *THE DARING NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERGIRL* is now on sale and, besides incredibly gorgeous artwork by the team of Carmine Infantino and Bob Oksner, it features a dramatic cover of the Girl of Steel flying above her new home town—Chicago. You readers in the Windy City... and anyone who's ever seen it from the air... should get a kick out of the incredible panoramic scene cover artist Rich Buckler has produced. You really can look at it and say, "Look, Ma—there's *our* apartment!"

* * * * *

Dear Julie,

"H.I.V.E. and Go Seek" was one of your better *Superman* stories. *Superman* was in action, yet the story did not completely revolve around him. Marv Wolfman worked the entire supporting cast into the tale and he even managed to make Lois's part seem like he was still scripting her solo series in *SUPERMAN FAMILY*.

The use of the *Teen Titans* was welcome for a number of reasons: 1) It seems natural that *Superman*, or any other hero battling H.I.V.E., would go to the *Titans* for info. (Marv seems to be working very hard at putting continuity into the comics.) 2) You did it without putting "In This Issue—*THE NEW TEEN TITANS*" all over the cover.

Just out of curiosity, how many Pulitzer Prizes has Lois won?

There's not a whole lot I can say about the *Atom* tale, "Carnaval of Catastrophe", but Bob Rozakis did his usual good job.

All in all I really enjoyed ACTION #532 and I just wanted you to know that.

MIKE SOPP
438 West 32nd
Erie, PA 16508

How many Pulitzers has Lois won? This sounds like a job for... E. Nelson Bridwell! (How's that for passing the buck?) And while Nelson tries to find the time to dig out the answer, we can tell you that Perry White has won three of them! (Hey, don't complain! Any answer is better than no answer at all!)—BR

* * * * *

Dear Julie:

Marv Wolfman, The writer of "H.I.V.E. and Go Seek" gave us a guest appearance of the *Teen Titans* without overusing them. He also wrote a darn good story.

Curt Swan: The penciller about whom there is little left to be said. He did a fantastic job on Lois Lane!

Dave Hunt: The inker who served up his best inking job in a long time! Top shots were the close-ups of Lois and Lana.

John Costanza and Jerry Serpe: The letterer and colorist, both of whom are rarely mentioned in letters. They did a fine job, so I thought I'd mention them.

Julius Schwartz: The editor who likes to see nothing but original stuff! *ACTION* #532 was just that! Thanks for stressing that point with your staff.

KEVIN T. BROWN
7846F West Lawrence Avenue
Norridge, IL 60656

* * * * *

COMICS IN PAPERBACK DEPARTMENT: We've mentioned before that Tor Books has been releasing a number of paperback books featuring classic tales from the DC archives in paperback form and we thought this would be a good time to update their list a bit! Already available at bookstores everywhere (and from smart comics dealers as well) are book versions of *THE WORLD OF KRYPTON*, *SWAMP THING* (the first three Len Wein/Berni Wrightson issues), and *THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPERHEROES STARRING SUPERMAN* (featuring the very first newspaper adventure of the popular strip). On their schedule to appear even as you read this (if you're reading this in August, 1982) is *THE UNTOLD LEGEND OF THE BATMAN* and coming up next (you knew we were leading up to something, didn't you?) is *THE NEW TEEN TITANS*, featuring the first three issues of their mag plus the preview story that originally appeared in *DC COMICS PRESENTS*. For those of you who have been hooked on the Titans, here's your chance to see their classic early adventures without shelling out those astronomical back-issues prices! Each of these gems costs $1.95 (except *SUPERHEROES*, which is a few pages shorter and is $1.75) and well worth it! Well, don't just sit there—go get 'em!

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

It is refreshing to see your change in the lettercol styles in this and in *SUPERMAN!* I think "Action/Reaction" is a much better title than "Superman in Action". Why didn't you think of it in the first place?

And by the way, doesn't Atom-scripter Bob Rozakis know how to spell "carnival"?

DANIEL TOBIAS
7 Broadview Road
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

Yes, I know how to spell it, but the "Carnaval" in the Atom story title is a specific celebration in Curacao and that's the way they spell it. As for the title of this column, if we'd been calling it Action/Reaction all along (which, by the way, is a name Julie wanted to use for quite some time), you'd all be asking us to change it now... to "Superman in Action"!—BR

* * * * *

Dear Sir,

When I saw Lois Lane infiltrate H.I.V.E., I nearly groaned. First of all, you wouldn't expect a terrorist in our own everyday world to be sprung by his buddies through bail and H.I.V.E. has already demonstrated itself to be far more bloodthirsty and dangerous than *any* terrorist group we have. Surely a simple bailing out of one of their members would cause them to smell—or rather, see— TRAP in bright letters. And when did H.I.V.E. show an ounce of concern over its stooges anyway? If anything, I'd expect them to be knocking off their captured members to ensure they don't talk!

GARY THOMPSON
3701 Roosevelt
Dearborn, MI 48124

There is a problem with that theory, Gary! If you keep killing off captured underlings, pretty soon you start to run out of them. After all, word would get around and no one would want the job .. especially when you figure how many of these guys get caught by the likes of Superman and the Teen Titans.—BR

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

To paraphrase Lois Lane, "I don't believe it!" I don't believe that Lois would fall for this set-up. The very fact that H.I.V.E. has only one woman member ought to be telling her something! Didn't she realize that they knew she was there and that the organization was using her?

RENE H. MANUEL III
3465 Greenwich Blvd.
Lake Charles, LA 70605

. .The H.I.V.E. is one of the most dangerous criminal groups in the world and yet Lois Lane goes ahead and infiltrates it. This is a bit of a mistake, since many heroes have tried to stop this group and never succeeded. How can a non-super-powered reporter do it?

FRANK KRULICKI
General Delivery
Hope, B C. VOX 1LO

To quote an old cliche, guys—"Never underestimate the power of a woman!" Particularly if that woman is Lois Lane!—BR

* * * * *

"NOW WRITING IN THE LEAD-OFF POSITION" DEPARTMENT: As you may have noticed, unless you're one of those readers who reads the letters pages first, Mike W. Barr is pinch-hitting in the scripting department for Marv Wolfman this issue, carrying on some of the sub-plots established by Marv Wolfman, while creating an adventure all his own at the same time. Mike's appearance is so Marv can catch his breath now that he's wearing two hats at DC—working as an editor on such books as *WONDER WOMAN* and *BLACKHAWK* and continuing to write the adventures of the *Teen Titans* and the *Night Force*.

And speaking of pinch-hitting, let's say hi to Irv Novick as he fills in for Curt Swan in the penciller's spot! It's been a while since Irv's had a chance to draw the Man of Steel and we're happy to have him here this issue and next!

Now if I could just remember who's on first!

* * * * *

Dear Editor:

What's up for *The Atom*? Is he going to be arrested for "killing" those two men? And where would the police put him? He could slip out of jail easily. The guy can shrink down to sub-atomic size, you know. Anyway, he knows a good lawyer!

By the way, I loved the conversation between "Bob" and "Al" on page six. Now who might they be?

M.J. BAILEY
Elma, WA

Them? Just a couple of real-life guys on vacation with their wives!—BR

* * * * *

PITTER PATTER OF LITTLE FEET DEPARTMENT: As we write this, Alex Saviuk and his lovely wife Jodi are on the verge of becoming parents. (Bet you thought the "Little Feet" we were going to talk about were The Atom's!) And Bob and Laurie Rozakis' little son Chuckie is about to celebrate his first birthday. This does not, however, mean that any (count 'em—any) of our back-up slot heroes are going to become parents in the near future. That rumor popped up at a convention recently when someone pointed out that *The Atom, Aquaman* and *Hawkman* were all married and none of them had children! Anyway, if something *does* happen, you'll be the first to know! (And we'll let you know the vital statistics about Baby Saviuk as soon as he/she makes them available!)

* * * * *

Dear Editor:

How about a team-up between *Superman* and his *ACTION* back-up co-stars in an upcoming issue?

CHARLES DAVID HASKELL
15 West 139th Street
New York, NY 10037

He's teamed up with Aquaman and The Atom recently... and is scheduled to join forces with Air Wave, Charles! But all three tales are over in our sister magazine, DC COMICS PRESENTS! Make sure it's on your list of must-buys!—Bob Rozakis

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY #35—The Boy of Steel must fight "The Yellow Peri Peril." By Bob Rozakis and Kurt Schaffenberger. DIAL H FOR HERO deals with the subject of "Who's Who Among Heroes and Villains." Plotted by E. Nelson Bridwell, dialogued by Rozakis, and drawn by Howard Bender and Joe Giella. Cover by Gil Kane.

DETECTIVE COMICS #520—Boss Thorne hires Dr. Thirteen to break the ghost of Hugo Strange. Meanwhile, the Batman gets the evidence he needs to nail Thorne—but his star witness is Deadshot, who wants to be released from prison in exchange for his testimony. "The Haunting of Boss Thorne" is by Gerry Conway and Don Newton, and concludes in BATMAN #354 next month. The second feature is BATGIRL, and it's by Barbara J. Randall and Trevor Von Eeden. Cover by Jim Aparo.

WARLORD ANNUAL #1—A DC best-seller in annual format for the first time! Morgan must protect a lady aristocrat and her lover-from-afar on their journey to her wedding and bridegroom-to-be. "Gateway to Doom" is a 41-page story written and pencilled by Mike Grell, inked by Bob Smith, and also features the return of Shikira, the cat lady. Cover by Grell.

WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #285—Beginning a multi-part story which changes the tone of the WORLD'S FINEST team-ups. A new logo heralds that this is indeed a Superman and Batman team-up book. Writer Cary Burkett has been given the freedom to stretch out stories, develop subplots and examine the characters of the Darknight Detective and the Man of Steel. As the story unfolds, Dr. Zodiac sends "animen"—half man, half animal—against the World's Finest Duo. Zatanna makes a guest appearance in this story pencilled by Rich Buckler.

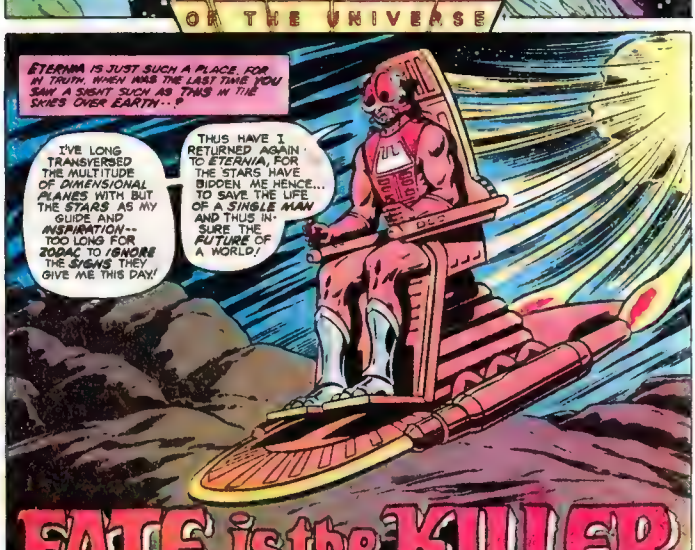
SWAMP THING ANNUAL #1—A comic book adaptation of the Avco-Embassy film by Bruce Jones, Mark Texiera and Tony De Zuniga

★★★SPECIAL MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE PREVIEW★★★

WHERE SCIENCE ENDS--MAGIC BEGINS...
MASTERS
OF THE UNIVERSE
A SPECIAL FREE GIFT TO YOU FROM THE NEW DC!
HE-MAN FIGHTS THE MYSTIC FORCES OF THE EVIL SKELETOR--WITH THE TIMELESS KINGDOM OF ETERNIA ITSELF AT STAKE!

★★★SPECIAL MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE PREVIEW★★★

THE UNIVERSE IS A BIG PLACE!
THE MULTIVERSE IS EVEN BIGGER! FOR EVERY DECISION A MAN CAN MAKE, THERE ARE A MILLION DIMENSIONS WHERE EACH AND EVERY ALTERNATIVE TAKES PLACE AS WELL.
FOR EVERY POSSIBILITY OF EVOLUTION, THERE LIKEWISE EXISTS A PLACE... MAN! ARE SO ALIKE THAT AS SMALL A THING AS ONE PERSON MAY BE ALL THAT DIFFERENTIATES IT FROM THE UNIVERSE NEXT DOOR.
OTHERS ARE FAR FROM THE WORLD WE KNOW -- WORLDS WHERE THE PREDOMINANT LIFE FORMS ARE EXACTLY LIKE US.. BUT CIVILIZATION HAS TAKEN A TOTALLY DIFFERENT TURN!
MASTERS
OF THE UNIVERSE


ETERNIA IS JUST SUCH A PLACE. FOR IN TRUTH, WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAW A SIGHT SUCH AS THIS IN THE SKIES OVER EARTH--?
I'VE LONG TRANSVERSED THE MULTITUDE OF DIMENSIONAL PLANES WITH BUT THE STARS AS MY GUIDE AND INSPIRATION -- TOO LONG FOR ZODAC TO IGNORE THE SIGNS THEY GIVE ME THIS DAY!
THUS HAVE I RETURNED AGAIN TO ETERNIA, FOR THE STARS HAVE BIDDEN ME HENCE... TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A SINGLE MAN AND THUS INSURE THE FUTURE OF A WORLD!

FATE is the KILLER

PAUL KUPPERBERG / WRITER
CURT SWAN & DAVE HUNT / ARTISTS
BEN ODA / LETTERER
ANTHONY TOLLIN / COLORIST
PAUL CLEVELAND / TALLEST
DAVE MANAK / EDITOR

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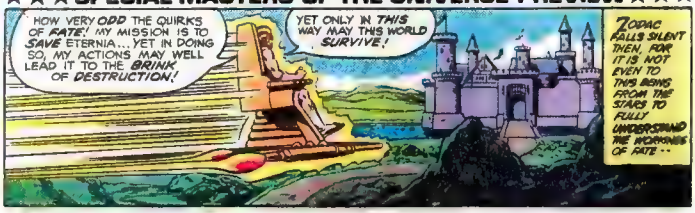
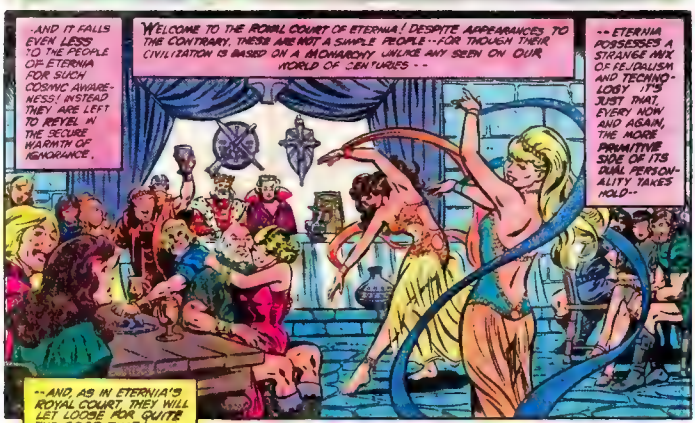
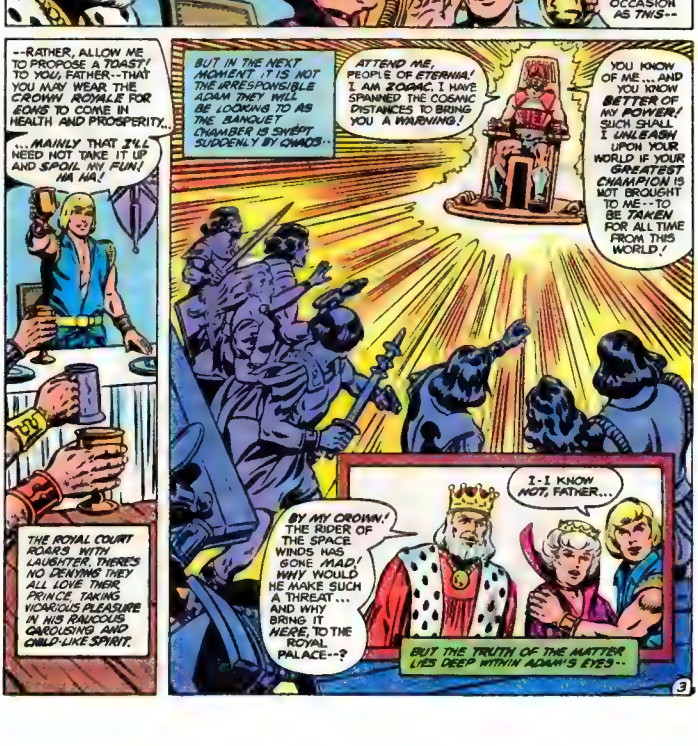

HOW VERY ODD THE QUIRKS OF FATE! MY MISSION IS TO SAVE ETERNIA... YET IN DOING SO, MY ACTIONS MAY WELL LEAD IT TO THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION!
YET ONLY IN THIS WAY MAY THIS WORLD SURVIVE!
ZODAC FALLS SILENT THEN, FOR IT IS NOT EVEN TO THIS BEING FROM THE STARS TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE WORKINGS OF FATE--

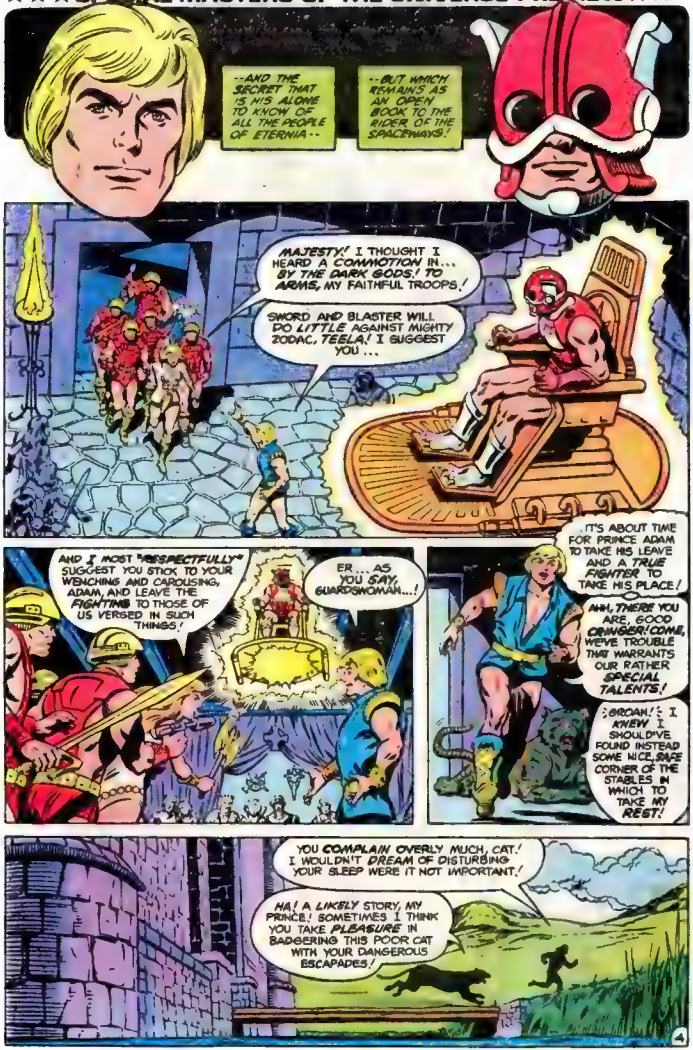

--AND IT FALLS EVEN LESS TO THE PEOPLE OF ETERNIA FOR SUCH COSMIC AWARENESS! INSTEAD THEY ARE LEFT TO REVEL IN THE SECURE WARMTH OF IGNORANCE.
WELCOME TO THE ROYAL COURT OF ETERNIA! DESPITE APPEARANCES TO THE CONTRARY, THESE ARE NOT A SIMPLE PEOPLE--FOR THOUGH THEIR CIVILIZATION IS BASED ON A MONARCHY UNLIKE ANY SEEN ON OUR WORLD OF CENTURIES--
--ETERNIA POSSESSES A STRANGE MIX OF FEUDALISM AND TECHNOLOGY. IT'S JUST THAT EVERY NOW AND AGAIN, THE MORE PRIMITIVE SIDE OF ITS DUAL PERSONALITY TAKES HOLD--
--AND, AS IN ETERNIA'S ROYAL COURT, THEY WILL LET LOOSE FOR QUITE THE GOOD TIME!

BY THE PROPHETS-- WHERE CAN THAT SON OF OURS BE, WOMAN! DOESN'T HE YET REALIZE THE HEIR TO THE THRONE MUST ATTEND THESE FEASTS?
CALM YOURSELF, MY HUSBAND! DIDN'T ADAM PROMISE HE WOULD BE HERE?
WHAT MUST THE MEMBERS OF THE COURT BE THINKING?
AYE! THAT HE DID, GOOD QUEEN--
--BUT YOU CERTAINLY DIDN'T EXPECT HIM TO SHOW UP WITHOUT SUITABLE COMPANIONSHIP, DID YOU?
HAIL, PRINCE ADAM!
AMMM... NOW THE REVELRY CAN BEGIN IN EARNEST!
ONLY TWO WENCHES, LAD--? YOU'RE LOSING YOUR CHARM!

FORGIVE MY TARDINESS, MOTHER AND FATHER, AS YOU CAN SEE, I WAS, ER... UNAVOIDABLY DETAINED.
I PREFER TO THINK OF IT AS TRAINING IN THE DELICATE ART OF NEGOTIATION, GOOD MAN-AT-ARMS!
OUT WENCHING AGAIN, YOU MEAN, BOY!

REALLY-- YOU TREAT ADAM AS IF HE WERE ALREADY KING... NOT JUST PRINCE OF THE REALM.
IF YOU PLEASE, MAJESTY--YOU INDULGE HIS TOMFOOLERY ENOUGH AS IS. I THINK THE LEAST HE COULD DO IS TO SOMETIMES FULFILL HIS PRINCELY DUTIES.
MAN-AT-ARMS-- MOTHER, LET US NOT BICKER ON SUCH A MOMENTOUS OCCASION AS THIS--

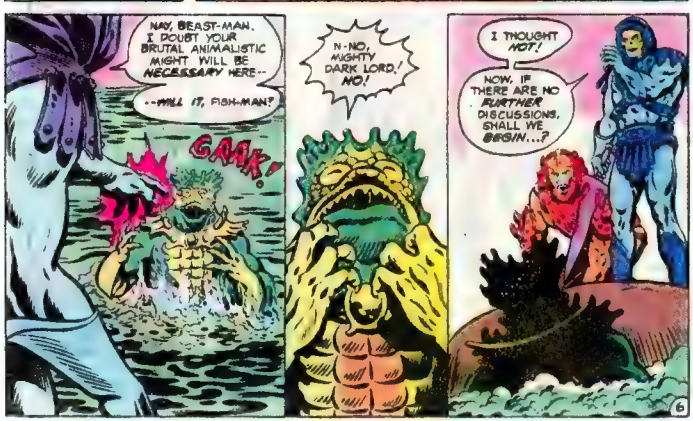

--RATHER, ALLOW ME TO PROPOSE A TOAST! TO YOU, FATHER--THAT YOU MAY WEAR THE CROWN ROYALE FOR EONS TO COME IN HEALTH AND PROSPERITY...
...MAINLY THAT I'LL NEED NOT TAKE IT UP AND SPOIL MY FUN! HA HA!
THE ROYAL COURT ROARS WITH LAUGHTER. THERE'S NO DENYING THEY ALL LOVE THEIR PRINCE TAKING VICARIOUS PLEASURE IN HIS RAUCOUS CAROUSING AND CHILD-LIKE SPIRIT.
BUT IN THE NEXT MOMENT IT IS NOT THE IRRESPONSIBLE ADAM THEY WILL BE LOOKING TO AS THE BANQUET CHAMBER IS SWEPT SUDDENLY BY CHAOS--
ATTEND ME, PEOPLE OF ETERNIA! I AM ZOAC. I HAVE SPANNED THE COSMIC DISTANCES TO BRING YOU A WARNING!
YOU KNOW OF ME... AND YOU KNOW BETTER OF MY POWER! SUCH SHALL I UNLEASH UPON YOUR WORLD IF YOUR GREATEST CHAMPION IS NOT BROUGHT TO ME--TO BE TAKEN FOR ALL TIME FROM THIS WORLD!
I-I KNOW NOT, FATHER...
BY MY CROWN! THE RIDER OF THE SPACE WINDS HAS GONE MAD! WHY WOULD HE MAKE SUCH A THREAT... AND WHY BRING IT HERE, TO THE ROYAL PALACE--?
BUT THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER LIES DEEP WITHIN ADAM'S EYES--


--AND THE SECRET THAT IS HIS ALONE TO KNOW OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF ETERNIA--
--BUT WHICH REMAINS AS AN OPEN BOOK TO THE RIDER OF THE SPACEWAYS!
MAJESTY! I THOUGHT I HEARD A COMMOTION IN... BY THE DARK GODS! TO ARMS, MY FAITHFUL TROOPS!
SWORD AND BLASTER WILL DO LITTLE AGAINST MIGHTY ZODAC, TEELA! I SUGGEST YOU...
AND I MOST "RESPECTFULLY" SUGGEST YOU STICK TO YOUR WENCHING AND CAROUSING, ADAM, AND LEAVE THE FIGHTING TO THOSE OF US VERSED IN SUCH THINGS!
ER... AS YOU SAY, GUARDSWOMAN...!
...IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR PRINCE ADAM TO TAKE HIS LEAVE AND A TRUE FIGHTER TO TAKE HIS PLACE!
AH!, THERE YOU ARE, GOOD GRINGER! COME, WE'VE TROUBLE THAT WARRANTS OUR RATHER SPECIAL TALENTS!
;GRGAN! I KNEW I SHOULD'VE FOUND INSTEAD SOME NICE, SAFE CORNER OF THE STABLES IN WHICH TO TAKE MY REST!
YOU COMPLAIN OVERLY MUCH, CAT! I WOULDN'T DREAM OF DISTURBING YOUR SLEEP WERE IT NOT IMPORTANT!
HA! A LIKELY STORY, MY PRINCE! SOMETIMES I THINK YOU TAKE PLEASURE IN BADGERING THIS POOR CAT WITH YOUR DANGEROUS ESCAPADES!
4

SKREEEEEE!
SKREEEOW!
AYE? THEN WHAT SAY YOU TO THAT, CRINGER... THE CALL TO ARMS OF THE FALCON?
SIGH.' AS YOU SAY, ADAM... WE'RE NEEDED! THOUGH THE GODS KNOW WHY I WAS SO HONORED TO BE CHOSEN FOR SUCH HAZARDOUS DUTY!
THE AIR IS STILL IN THE COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND THE ROYAL CASTLE, SAVE FOR THE PLAINTIVE CRY OF A DARK BIRD OF PREY -- AND THE POUNDING FOOT-FALL OF THE PRINCE AND HIS CAT--
--AND IN THE NEXT INSTANT...
YE HAVE ANSWERED MY SUMMONS WITH HASTE, SWEET PRINCE--
--AS IT SHOULD BE, FOR THOU WOULD NOT BE SO CALLED DID NOT THE SORCERESS HAVE NEED OF THY POWERS!
I AM EVER AT YOUR COMMAND, GODDESS! SPEAK THEN AND SAY HOW MIGHTY HE-MAN AND FAITHFUL BATTLE CAT MAY BE OF SERVICE--
--THOUGH THIS ONCE I DO THINK I KNOW ALREADY OF THE MENACE THAT FACES ETERNIA!
YE SPEAK OF ZODAC, DO YE NOT, MY CHAMPION?
'TIS NOT HE OF WHICH I SPEAK! NAY, THE SAILOR OF THE SOLAR WINDS IS NO THREAT TO THIS WORLD'S WELL-BEING--
--NOT WHILST THE BEING OF EVIL INCARNATE IS YET LOOSE ON ETERNIA... NOT WHILST HE CALLED SKELETOR CONTINUES HIS SEARCH FOR THE POWER SWORD HE HOPES WILL MAKE HIM RULER SUPREME O'ER THY PEOPLE!
SKELETOR! MAY THE DARK GODS BURN HIS EVIL SOUL!
YE MAY RELY NOT UPON AID FROM BEYOND IN THY MISSION, HE-MAN... NOR MUST YE LET ANY STAND IN THE WAY OF COMPLETING THE TASK I HAVE SET TO THEE!
GO NOW, MY WARRIOR... AND MAY THE GODS BE WITH THEE!
MY THANKS, GODDESS! HE-MAN WILL NOT FAIL YOU... SKELETOR SHALL BE STOPPED!

AND SPEAKING OF THE DEVIL...
AS YOU COMMAND, SO HAS MER-MAN COME, MIGHTY SKELETOR! WHAT IS IT YOU WISH OF ME?
BESIDES YOUR UNDYING OBEDIENCE, FISH MAN?
SELDOM DOES THE DARK LORD HAVE NEED OF AID FROM SUCH AS YOU, BUT ON THIS DAY I FIND I MUST, FOR YOU HAVE KNOWLEDGE UNPARALLELED OF THE ETERNIAN SEAS, MER-MAN.

--AND 'TIS THERE I MAY FIND THE POWER I NEED TO AT LAST MAKE THIS WORLD MINE OWN! LONG HAVE I MEDITATED UPON THE LOCATION OF THAT POWER--
--WHICH RESTS IN THE TWIN HALVES OF THE AWESOME POWER SWORD JOINED TOGETHER AS ONE! I POSSESS BUT ONE HALF OF THE SWORD... AND MY MEDITATIONS HAVE SHOWN ME THE OTHER--
--LIES YONDER... BURIED IN THE DEEPEST TRENCH OF THE DARK SEA! 'TIS THERE YOU SHALL LEAD ME, MER-MAN!
BY THE WATER SPIRITS, SKELETOR... S-SURELY YOU KNOW THAT NONE HAVE CHALLENGED THE DEPTHS OF THE BLACK PIT AND EVER RETURNED TO TELL THE TALE!
GRRRR! LET YOUR HUMBLE BEAST-MAN HAVE AT THE IMPUDENT COWARD, MASTER!


NAY, BEAST-MAN. I DOUBT YOUR BRUTAL ANIMALISTIC MIGHT WILL BE NECESSARY HERE--
--WILL IT, FISH-MAN?
GAAK!
N-NO, MIGHTY DARK LORD! NO!
I THOUGHT NOT!
NOW, IF THERE ARE NO FURTHER DISCUSSIONS, SHALL WE BEGIN...?

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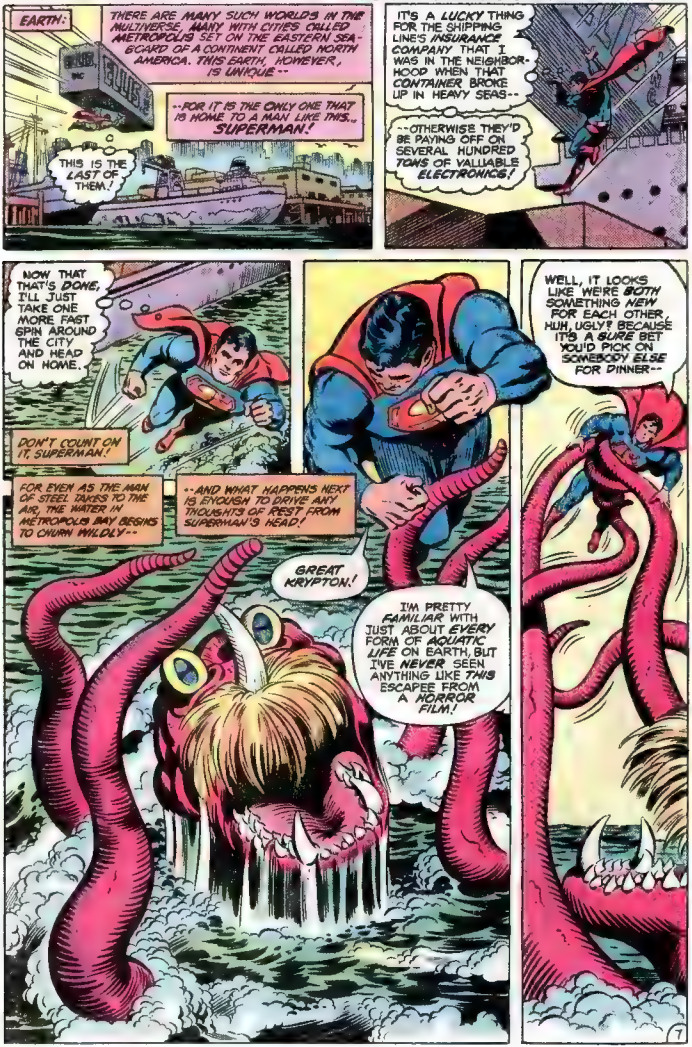
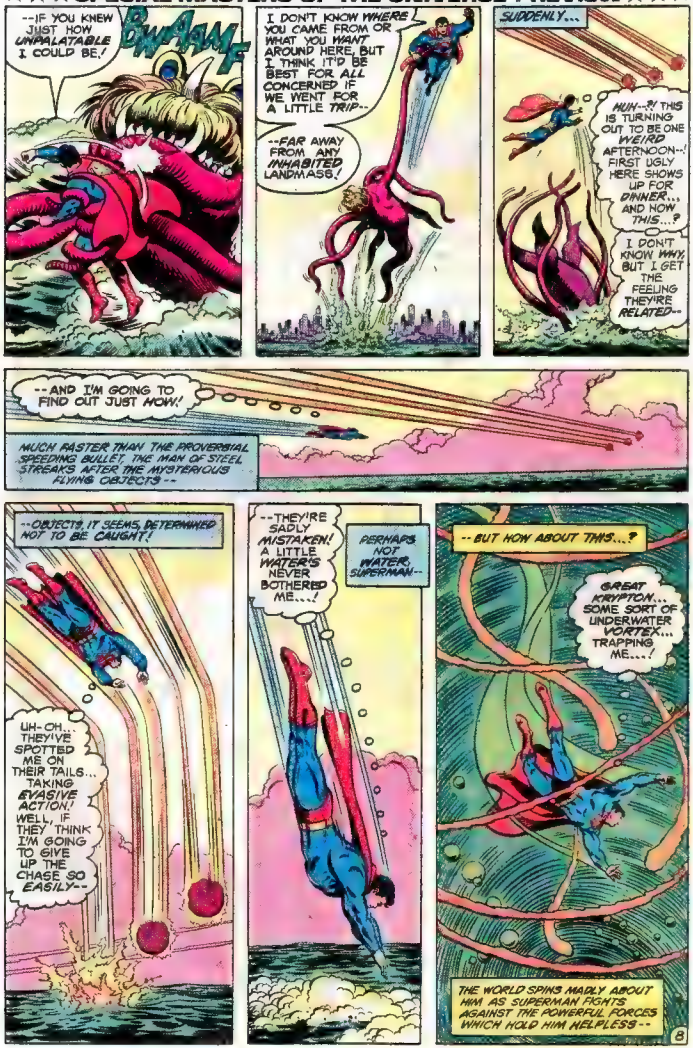

EARTH:
THERE ARE MANY SUCH WORLDS IN THE MULTIVERSE, MANY WITH CITIES CALLED METROPOLIS SET ON THE EASTERN SEABOARD OF A CONTINENT CALLED NORTH AMERICA. THIS EARTH, HOWEVER, IS UNIQUE--
--FOR IT IS THE ONLY ONE THAT IS HOME TO A MAN LIKE THIS... SUPERMAN!
THIS IS THE LAST OF THEM.
IT'S A LUCKY THING FOR THE SHIPPING LINE'S INSURANCE COMPANY THAT I WAS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHEN THAT CONTAINER BROKE UP IN HEAVY SEAS--
--OTHERWISE THEY'D BE PAYING OFF ON SEVERAL HUNDRED TONS OF VALUABLE ELECTRONICS!
NOW THAT THAT'S DONE, I'LL JUST TAKE ONE MORE FAST SPIN AROUND THE CITY AND HEAD ON HOME.
DON'T COUNT ON IT, SUPERMAN!
FOR EVEN AS THE MAN OF STEEL TAKES TO THE AIR, THE WATER IN METROPOLIS BAY BEGINS TO CHURN WILDLY--
--AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS ENOUGH TO DRIVE ANY THOUGHTS OF REST FROM SUPERMAN'S HEAD!
GREAT KRYPTON!
I'M PRETTY FAMILIAR WITH JUST ABOUT EVERY FORM OF AQUATIC LIFE ON EARTH, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS ESCAPEE FROM A HORROR FILM!
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE BOTH SOMETHING NEW FOR EACH OTHER. HUH, UGLY? BECAUSE IT'S A SURE BET YOU'D PICK ON SOMEBODY ELSE FOR DINNER--


--IF YOU KNEW JUST HOW UNAMALATABLE I COULD BE!
BWAAAM
I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU CAME FROM OR WHAT YOU WANT AROUND HERE, BUT I THINK IT'D BE BEST FOR ALL CONCERNED IF WE WENT FOR A LITTLE TRIP--
--FAR AWAY FROM ANY INHABITED LANDMASS!
SUDDENLY...
HUH--?! THIS IS TURNING OUT TO BE ONE WEIRD AFTERNOON--! FIRST UGLY HERE SHOWS UP FOR DINNER... AND NOW THIS...?
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I GET THE FEELING THEY'RE RELATED--
--AND I'M GOING TO FIND OUT JUST HOW!
MUCH FASTER THAN THE PROVERBIAL SPEEDING BULLET, THE MAN OF STEEL STREAKS AFTER THE MYSTERIOUS FLYING OBJECTS--
--OBJECTS, IT SEEMS, DETERMINED NOT TO BE CAUGHT!
UH-OH... THEY'VE SPOTTED ME ON THEIR TAILS... TAKING EVASIVE ACTION! WELL, IF THEY THINK I'M GOING TO GIVE UP THE CHASE SO EASILY--
--THEY'RE SADLY MISTAKEN! A LITTLE WATER'S NEVER BOTHERED ME...!
PERHAPS NOT WATER, SUPERMAN--
-- BUT HOW ABOUT THIS...?
GREAT KRYPTON... SOME SORT OF UNDERWATER VORTEX... TRAPPING ME...!
THE WORLD SPINS MADLY ABOUT HIM AS SUPERMAN FIGHTS AGAINST THE POWERFUL FORCES WHICH HOLD HIM HELPLESS--

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WHILE HE RETURN TO ETERNIA...
OHMARO, BRAVE BATTLE CAT! THE GODDESS WOULD NOT HAVE CALLED UPON US WERE NOT SKELETOR'S THREAT TO OUR WORLD IMMINENT.
AYE, HE-MAN... AS EVER! TRULY DO I LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN THE MALEVOLENT SORCERER'S INFLUENCE UPON ETERNIA IS FOREVER ENDED!
AS DO I, CAT! ALL ETERNIA DOES RULE THE DAY THE EVIL FROM ANOTHER WORLD SET FOOT UPON OUR LAND!
GRAWRR! THEN LET US FIND HIM, MAN ... SO I MAY AT LAST FASTEN MY JAWS ABOUT HIS FOUL FLESH!
YOU SHALL DO NO SUCH THING, CAT--ALSE IT CAN BE DONE WITHOUT YOUR MASTER'S AID!
ROARRR!
BY THE STARS! WE ARE ATTACKED! THEN EVIL SKELETOR HAS COME TO US--?
KAHTHOOOM!
NAY, HE-MAN! 'TIS NOT THE DARK LORD YOU NEED CONCERN YOURSELF WITH THIS DAY, NOT WHEN YOU FACE THE RIDER OF THE SPACEWAYS--ZODAC!
STAND ASIDE, ZODAC! WHILE THE SHADOW OF SKELETOR LOOMS OMINOUS OVER THE LAND, I'VE NO QUARREL WITH THE LIKES OF YOU... SAVE SHOULD YOU DESIRE TO CREATE ONE!
I CARE NOT FOR YOUR PETTY WORLDLY CONCERNS, HE-MAN! YOU KNOW THAT ZODAC IS A BEING COSMIC... NEITHER GOOD NOR EVIL, THAT WHICH I COME TO TAKE YOU FOR IS OF FAR GREATER IMPORTANCE THAN THE FATE OF THIS WORLD!
ABANDON YOUR QUEST, MAN! COME WITH ME AND THE COSMOS SHALL BE YOUR HOME. STAY-- AND YOU SHALL DIE!
YOU ARE BOLD, STAR SPAWN! THE GODDESS DID TELL ME I MAY LET NONE STAND IN THE WAY OF MY MISSION--
--YET SURELY DISPATCHING YOU TO WHENCE YOU CAME WILL DELAY ME NOT LONG!
THEN LET THE CONSEQUENCES BE ON YOUR HEAD, HE-MAN--
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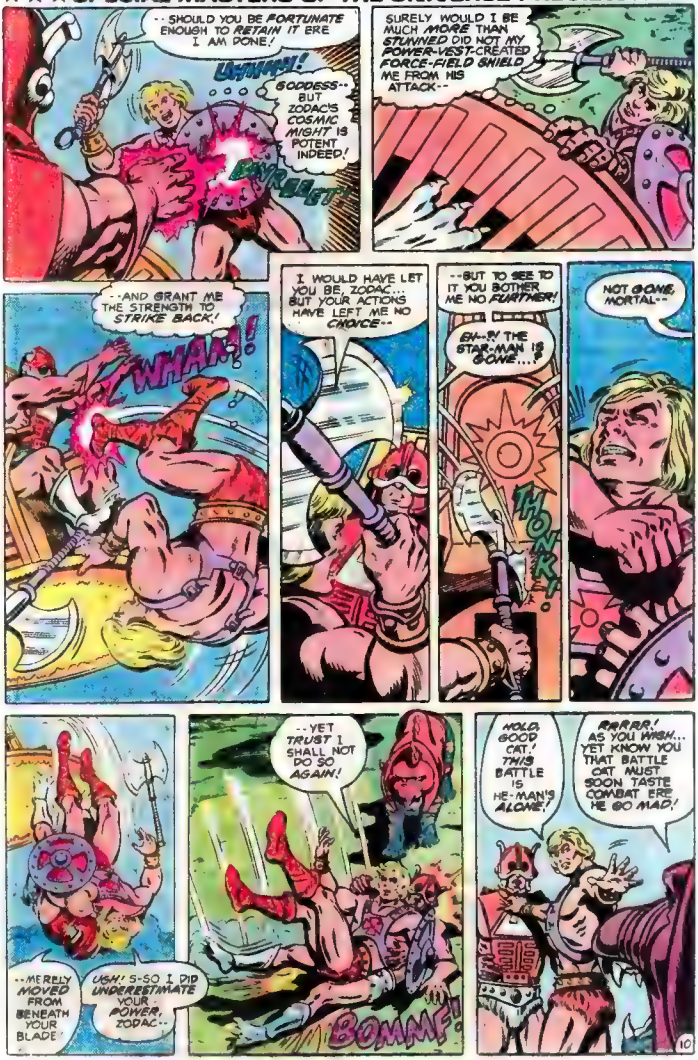
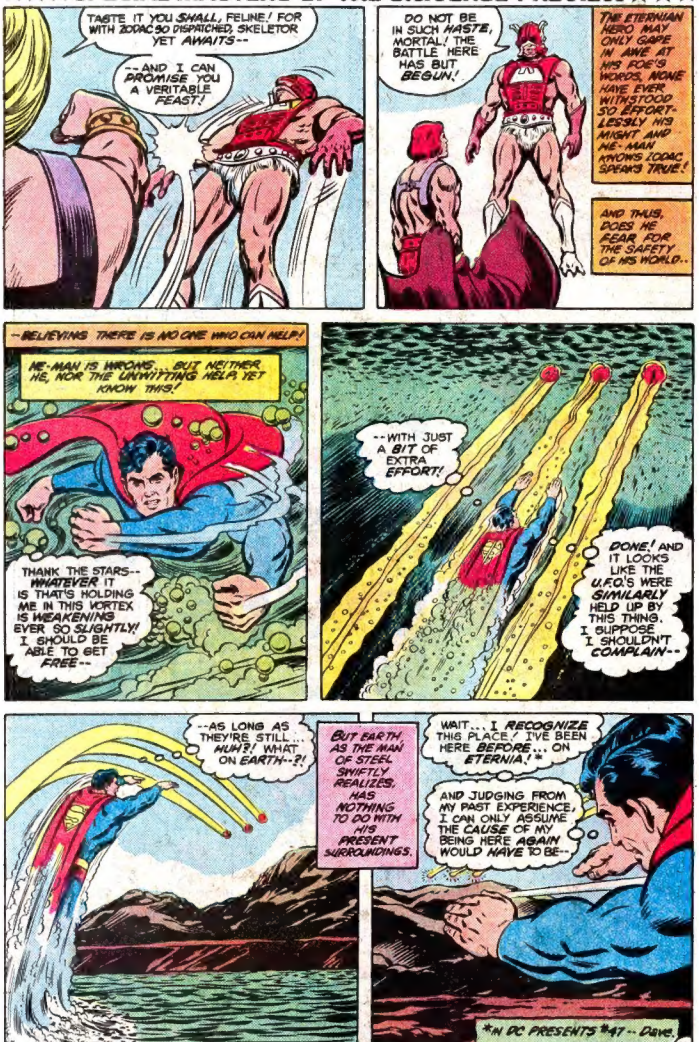
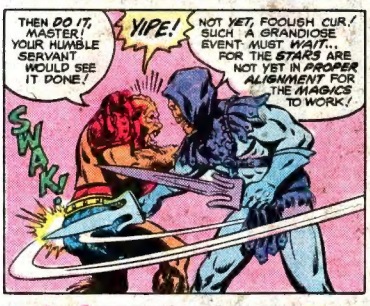

--SHOULD YOU BE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO RETAIN IT ERE I AM DONE!
UHHHH!
GODDESS-- BUT ZODAC'S COSMIC MIGHT IS POTENT INDEED!
SURELY WOULD I BE MUCH MORE THAN STUNNED DID NOT MY POWER-VEST-CREATED FORCE-FIELD SHIELD ME FROM HIS ATTACK--
--AND GRANT ME THE STRENGTH TO STRIKE BACK!
WHAM!
I WOULD HAVE LET YOU BE, ZODAC... BUT YOUR ACTIONS HAVE LEFT ME NO CHOICE--
--BUT TO SEE TO IT YOU BOTHER ME NO FURTHER!
EH--? THE STAR-MAN IS GONE...!
THONK!
NOT GONE, MORTAL--
--MERELY MOVED FROM BENEATH YOUR BLADE!
UGH! S-SO I DID UNDERESTIMATE YOUR POWER, ZODAC--
--YET TRUST I SHALL NOT DO SO AGAIN!
BOMM!
HOLD, GOOD CAT! THIS BATTLE IS HE-MAN'S ALONE!
RRRR! AS YOU WISH... YET KNOW YOU THAT BATTLE CAT MUST SOON TASTE COMBAT ERE HE GO MAD!


TASTE IT YOU SWALL, FELINE! FOR WITH ZODAC SO DISPATCHED, SKELETOR YET AWAITS--
--AND I CAN PROMISE YOU A VERITABLE FEAST!
DO NOT BE IN SUCH HASTE, MORTAL! THE BATTLE HERE HAS BUT BEGUN!
THE ETERNIAN HERO MAY ONLY GAPE IN AWE AT HIS FOE'S WORDS, NONE HAVE EVER WITHSTOOD SO EFFORTLESSLY HIS MIGHT AND HE-MAN KNOWS ZODAC SPEAKS TRUE!
AND THUS, DOES HE FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF HIS WORLD..
--BELIEVING THERE IS NO ONE WHO CAN HELP!
HE-MAN IS WRONG... BUT NEITHER HE, NOR THE UNWITTING HELP, YET KNOW THIS!
THANK THE STARS-- WHATEVER IT IS THAT'S HOLDING ME IN THIS VORTEX IS WEAKENING EVER SO SLIGHTLY! I SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET FREE--
--WITH JUST A BIT OF EXTRA EFFORT!
DONE! AND IT LOOKS LIKE THE U.F.O.'S WERE SIMILARLY HELD UP BY THIS THING. I SUPPOSE I SHOULDN'T COMPLAIN--
--AS LONG AS THEY'RE STILL... HUH?! WHAT ON EARTH--?!
BUT EARTH, AS THE MAN OF STEEL SWIFTLY REALIZES, HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS PRESENT SURROUNDINGS.
WAIT... I RECOGNIZE THIS PLACE! I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE... ON ETERNIA!*
AND JUDGING FROM MY PAST EXPERIENCE, I CAN ONLY ASSUME THE CAUSE OF MY BEING HERE AGAIN WOULD HAVE TO BE--
*IN DC PRESENTS #47 -- Dave.

--SKELETOR!
AT LAST--THE POWER SWORD IS MINE!
LONG HAVE I AWAITED THIS DAY WHEN THE ELUSIVE TWIN OF THE SWORD I DID HOLD WOULD BE MINE! LITTLE DID I SUSPECT THAT WHICH I SENSED AT THE OCEAN'S FLOOR WOULD BE BUT A DIMENSIONAL PORTAL TO WHERE THE SWORD TRULY LAY... UPON DISTANT EARTH!
'TWAS AS CHILD'S PLAY TO RELIEVE THE SWORD FROM WHENCE IT RESTED--

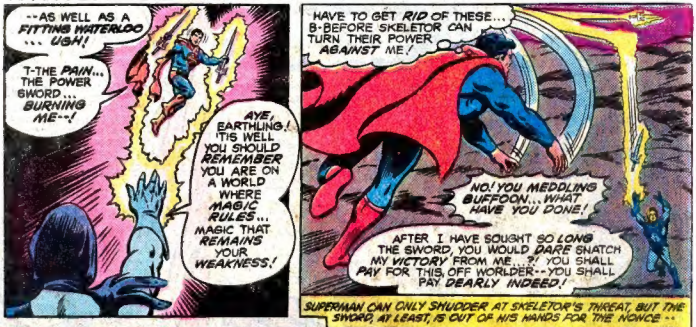
--WHILST DELAYING THAT WORLD'S MIGHTY SUPERMAN FROM INTERFERING IN MY THEFT BY CONJURING A SERPENT TO KEEP HIM OCCUPIED!
BUT NOW ITIS DONE, AND ALL THAT REMAINS IS THE JOINING OF THE HALVES FOR THE SECRETS OF YON CASTLE GRAYSKULL TO BE REVEALED--AND BY REVEALING THEM, MAKE ETERNIA MINE AS WELL! HA HA HA!


THEN DO IT, MASTER! YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT WOULD SEE IT DONE!
YIPE!
NOT YET, FOOLISH CUR! SUCH A GRANDIOSE EVENT MUST WAIT... FOR THE STARS ARE NOT YET IN PROPER ALIGNMENT FOR THE MAGICS TO WORK!
SWAK!

BUT SOON, LACKEY... VERY SOON THE TIME SHALL BE RIPE! AND WHEN THE DARK STAR DOES STAND POISED 'TWIXT THE ETERNIAN MOONS--
--THIS WORLD WILL FEEL MY MIGHT! HA HA HA HA!

I WOULDN'T COUNT ON THAT, SKELETOR--

--I WOULDN'T COUNT ON IT AT ALL!
SUPERMAN! CURSE YOU, ALIEN... I KNOW NOT HOW YOU FOUND ME, BUT YOU SHAN'T HALT MY SCHEME--NOT AGAIN!
IT DOESN'T TAKE A GENIUS TO FIGURE YOU'RE STILL AFTER THE SAME THING AS WHEN WE LAST MET, SKULL-FACE, MAKING CASTLE GRAYSKULL THE FIRST PLACE I'D LOOK FOR YOU--


--AS WELL AS A FITTING WATERLOO ... UGH!
T-THE PAIN... THE POWER SWORD... BURNING ME--!
AYE, EARTHLING! 'TIS WELL YOU SHOULD REMEMBER YOU ARE ON A WORLD WHERE MAGIC RULES... MAGIC THAT REMAINS YOUR WEAKNESS!
HAVE TO GET RID OF THESE... B-BEFORE SKELETOR CAN TURN THEIR POWER AGAINST ME!
NO! YOU MEDDLING BUFFOON... WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!
AFTER I HAVE SOUGHT SO LONG THE SWORD, YOU WOULD DARE SNATCH MY VICTORY FROM ME?! YOU SHALL PAY FOR THIS, OFF WORLDER--YOU SHALL PAY DEARLY INDEED!
SUPERMAN CAN ONLY SHUDDER AT SKELETOR'S THREAT, BUT THE SWORD, AT LEAST, IS OUT OF HIS HANDS FOR THE NONCE--

--OFF TO A PLACE THAT IS HOPEFULLY, SAFER...
NEVER, STAR-RIDER! AS LONG AS THERE IS BREATH YET IN MY BODY, HE-MAN SHALL FIGHT--
BAH! ALL YOU DO IS DELAY YOUR INEVITABLE FATE, HE-MAN! STAND STILL AND LET ZODAC HAVE DONE WITH YOU!

--AND NEITHER VICTORY NOR DEFEAT SHALL COME EASILY... OOOFF!
WHAT MANNER OF ATTACK BE THIS...?

NAY... 'TIS ONE HALF OF THE POWER SWORD! YET... HOW--? UNLESS... AYE--THIS MUST THEN BE THE WORK OF EVIL SKELETOR! WHO ELSE WOULD BE SO BOLD!
TO ME, BATTLE CAT! THE GAUNTLET HAS BEEN THROWN DOWN AND I DO RISE TO THE CHALLENGE!
BUT WHAT OF ZODAC, HE-MAN--?

HE MUST WAIT! SKELETOR MENACES ALL OF ETERNIA ... AND MY LIFE IS ALL THAT IS THREATENED HERE! TRULY, DO I HAVE A CHOICE?
HE-MAN... NAY!
THIS MUST NOT BE! FOR DID NOT THE STARS TELL OF HE-MAN'S DEATH SHOULD HE THIS DAY MEET SKELETOR...?
MAYHAPS THEY DID, BUT THE ETERNIAN CHAMPION KNOWS NOT OF THE STARS--

--AND IN TRUTH, HE WOULD NOT CARE!
BY THE GODS! MADNESS SURELY REIGNS HERE! YONDER LIES AN ALLY FROM ANOTHER WORLD ... NEAR DEATH AT THE HANDS OF MY FOE! HALT, SKELETOR!
HE-MAN! BAH, BUT I DID EXPECT YOUR COMING--

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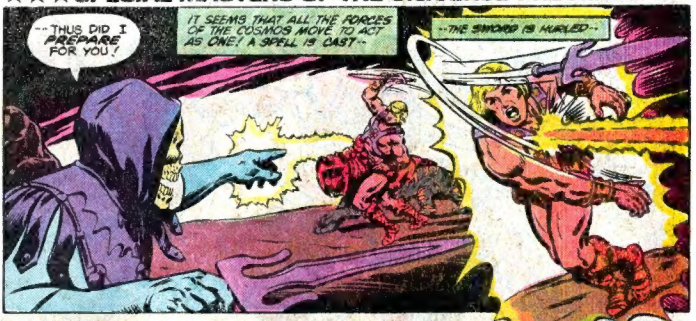

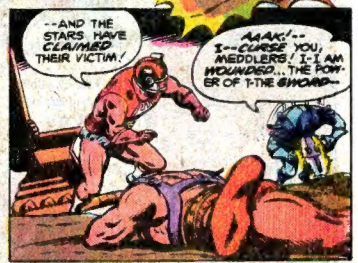

--AND THE ENERGY MUST BE MADE TO SEEK ITS OTHER FORM! SEEK IT IT DOES... INTO THE LIFE-FORCE OF THE MIGHTY HE-MAN... AND AGAINST ALL REASON -- AGAINST EVEN THE VERY DICTATES OF FATE...
HE LIVES! HE-MAN RISES... ALIVE!
UHHH... AYE... I... LIVE, ZODAC--THOUGH MY EYES... DID THEY NOT JUST GLIMPSE A WORLD OF... DEATH--?

THAT THEY DID, MY FRIEND... BUT YOU NEED NOT FEAR IT AGAIN AT MY HANDS! WE SHALL FIGHT NO MORE, FOR ZODAC WILL EXPLAIN TO YOU A MYSTERY OF THE FATES--
--BUT FOR THE NONCE, BE SATISFIED THAT YOU HAVE MET THOSE FATES... AND CHEATED THEM OF THEIR VICTORY!
ER...THAT'S ALL WELL AND GOOD... BUT WILL SOMEONE PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT J'AN DOING HERE...?
END

WATCH FOR PART ONE OF THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE MINI-SERIES ON SALE NEXT MONTH!